

# ShopSmart<sup>®</sup>

Your guide to the best deals from **ConsumerReports<sup>®</sup>**

**177**  
great buys  
inside!

**BEST  
SUNSCREENS  
for the money**



**Slash your  
ENERGY BILLS**



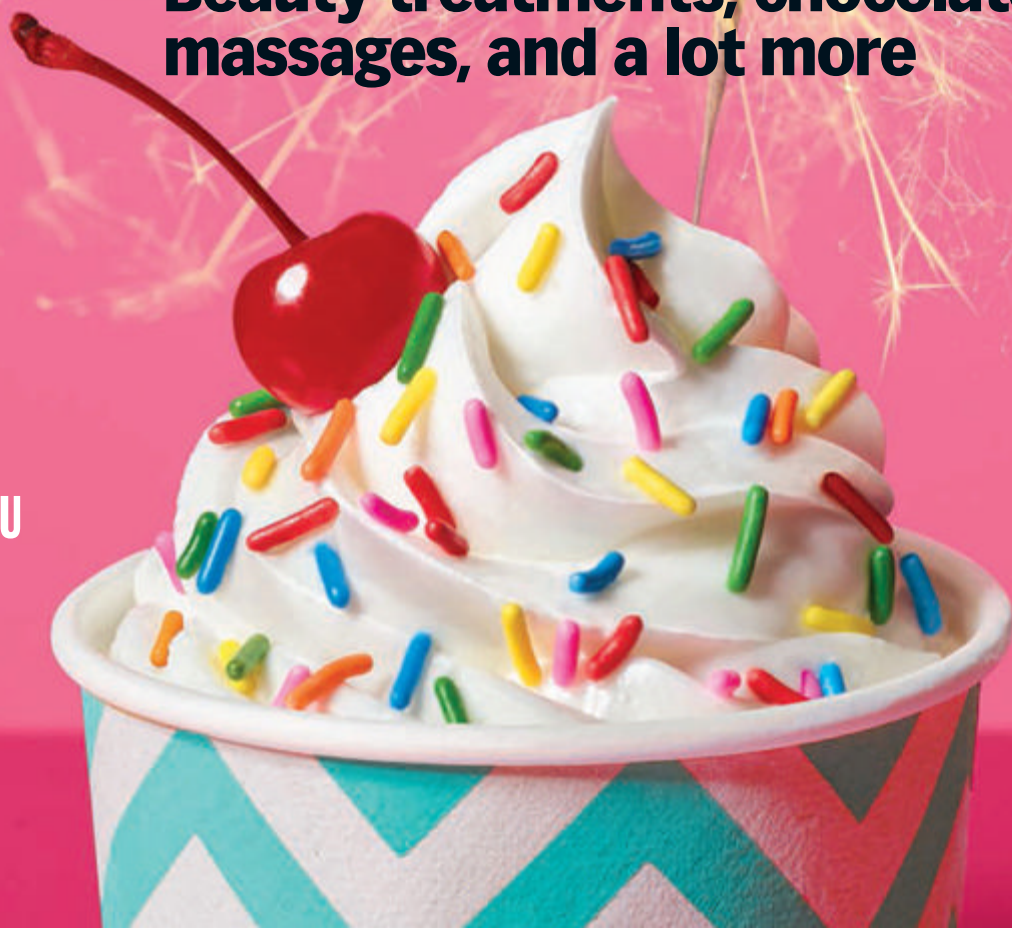
**SAFER  
bug sprays  
that work**



**PRIVACY ALERT!**  
**PRODUCTS THAT  
ARE WATCHING YOU**

# Get your *free* stuff!

**Beauty treatments, chocolate,  
massages, and a lot more**



## Cover story

### 16 Fantastic freebies

Get health screenings, beauty treatments, massages, and a lot more for zilch! Really! \*

## Departments

### 5 Shop smarter this month

Why bargain mavens should head to the mall on July 4 weekend, great new dollar-store deals, and more!

### 7 Shop talk

**New stuff we love** Samsung's gorgeous Galaxy S6 smartphone, a gadget that can cut your monthly cable bill, plus what to skip.

**What's the deal with ...**

Biased bloggers.

**Reader poll** How many sizes we wear to get the right fit.

**Now you know** Yummy new flavors of ice cream and gelato.

**Is it as good as it sounds?**

The Discover Freeze It card.

**Silly stuff** Diapers for dudes, plus other wacky products.

**Site to see** Find gifts for dads, grads, and birthday girls here.

16

Free stuff that will make you want to celebrate!

## In every issue

- 3 Editor's note
- 12 Ask our experts
- 14 Purse Smart: Summer scam alert
- 80 ShopSmart Extra: Cash-back sites
- 83 Recalls & safety alerts
- 84 Back in the day: 1968

\* FEATURED ON OUR COVER





34



47



73



30

57



40



79



64

Cover photograph by Levi Brown;  
food styling: Brett Kurzweil;  
prop styling: Angela Campos.

## The Buying Guide

### Home & Yard

- 27 **Cool fridge trends** New storage features that will keep your produce crisp and fresh.
- 30 **Organize your food** Make more room with these handy fridge accessories.
- 32 **Keep cool for less** 5 utility-bill slashers. \*
- 34 **Frozen assets** Match your ice to your drink.
- 36 **Home news** Cute cookout décor, an easy new way to spot safe cleaners, and more.

### Food & Drink

- 37 **Spice it up!** Healthy flavor boosters.
- 40 **Hot new 'health' foods** Stock up or not?
- 43 **5 surprising things about ...** Cucumbers.
- 44 **Price it out** Do's and don'ts for getting the best deals at the supermarket.
- 46 **Food news** The scoop on four new sugar substitutes, surprising veggie deals, and more!

### Health & Safety

- 47 **Safer in the sun** Which sunscreens you can really count on and which ones fall short. \*
- 52 **Swat team** The top insect repellents. \*
- 55 **Health news** How to keep your brain sharp as you age, the perils of puppy love, and more.

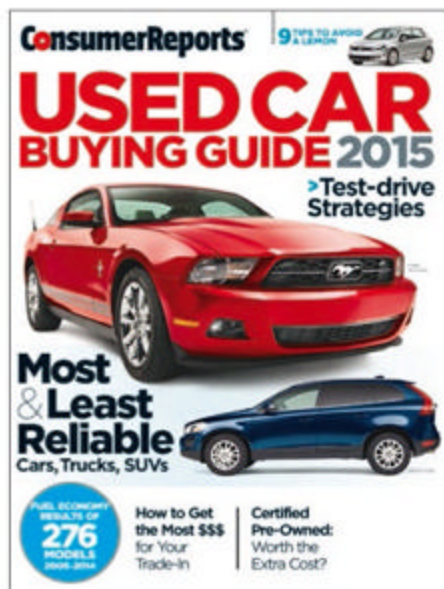
### Beauty & Fashion

- 57 **Size it up** One simple way to make sure you're getting the best deals on beauty products.
- 60 **Flip-flop shape** The secrets to beautiful feet.
- 64 **Best buys at Lands' End** Figure-flattering swimsuits for every body type.

### Cars & Tech

- 67 **Your stuff is watching you!** Products that collect info you might want to keep private. \*
- 72 **My disconnected year** A privacy expert spills her secrets to staying safe online.
- 73 **Time to buy!** Smartwatches you'll love.
- 74 **Tech smart** Commute-time sanity savers.
- 75 **Tech news** The best free security software in our tests, phone health risk, and more.
- 76 **The cars we'd buy again** Women's faves.
- 79 **Made in the USA?** Great cars that are truly American-made. (Surprise! One is a Honda.)

# Get Ratings and Buying Advice with *Consumer Reports*® Publications.



From  
kitchens  
to cars,  
we've got  
you covered



Make  
sure you  
buy only  
the best!

- Kitchen Planning & Buying Guide
- Consumer Reports® Buying Guide
- Your New Home
- Used Car Buying Guide
- Tech Electronics Buying Guide
- Best & Worst New Cars
- Ratings & Pricing Guide
- New Car Preview
- Best SUVs & Trucks
- New Car Ratings & Reviews
- Guide to Better Health
- Appliance Buying Guide

At bookstores nationwide or online at:  
[www.ConsumerReports.org/books](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/books)





Sometimes, finding a BOGO freebie you actually want isn't easy, but how the heck could you leave without it?

## Free and easy

I spend way too much to get free stuff! Clearly, that defeats the purpose, but I can't help myself. Last week I went to order a bra on sale at Macys.com and ended up with three so that I could get free shipping (it cost me \$74 to save \$10). Where the heck I'm going to put all of those bras, I have no idea! I didn't have room for the first one.

The truth is, we're all suckers for a giveaway. How many unneeded department-store lipsticks have you snapped up to get "free" makeup samples in those cute little bags (that you also don't need and don't have room for)? And admit it, you've loaded up on extra shoes and other unnecessary stuff for those irresistible buy-one-get-one-free deals. I know I have. And sometimes finding a BOGO freebie you actually want isn't easy—desperately rebrowsing the shoe aisles while my husband is tapping his feet by the door is a lot of pressure! But how the heck could you leave the store without your free pair?

It's almost impossible to resist getting something for nothing. So for this issue, we rounded up deals that are free *and* easy. In our cover story, on page 16, you'll find free classes, computer help, ice cream, and a lot more. You might even be able to get a free massage, haircut, or facial. We've also rounded up the best free software to protect your computer (page 75). And on page 80 you'll learn about online malls that give away money. Just start your shopping trip at those sites—which list special deals at places like Macys.com—and you can rack up cash back, no extra bras required!

Lisa Lee Freeman  
Editor in Chief

P.S. I'd love to hear from you! E-mail me at [lisa.freeman@cr.consumer.org](mailto:lisa.freeman@cr.consumer.org). Also, you can follow me on Twitter (@lisaaleefree).

### Get ShopSmart to go

Look for us on your Kindle or Nook. Or download the Zinio or Next Issue app. It's also available on Google Play. For more info plus our blog, go to [ShopSmart.org](http://ShopSmart.org).



### Tell us what you think!

E-mail us at [ShopSmart.org/letters](mailto:ShopSmart.org/letters)

### Join us on Facebook

To us, go to [facebook.com/shopsmartmag](https://facebook.com/shopsmartmag)

### Find us on Pinterest

Go to [pinterest.com/shopsmartdotorg](https://pinterest.com/shopsmartdotorg)

## The ShopSmart promise

**WE WILL ALWAYS TELL YOU THE TRUTH.** If we think a product is great, we'll tell you so. If it's not, we'll tell you that, too. We can tell it like it is because we are nonprofit and we don't take ads or free samples. As part of the Consumer Reports family, we spend millions of dollars a year to buy products so that we can test them in our 50 labs and at our auto test track. We also fight for laws to protect you from dangerous products and unfair sales practices. **Our mission: to help you get the best deal every time you shop.**

### LOOK FOR THESE SYMBOLS INSIDE:



**EXPERT TESTED**



**NOT SO HOT**



**DO NOT BUY**

**ConsumerReports®**

**The advice you need  
before you buy!**



**On Sale  
NOW!**

## Essential Guide Tells You:

- Top rated sedans
- Tire advice & ratings
- 252 vehicle profiles
- Crash-test results
- Road-test highlights

SSPUB02

**Available at bookstores  
or at  
[ConsumerReports.org/books](http://ConsumerReports.org/books)**

# ShopSmart®

## President and CEO

Marta L. Tellado

## Executive Vice President

Ricardo A. Castro

## Vice President, Brand, Product Strategy, and Integration

Leonora Wiener

## Vice President and General Manager, Magazine and Newsletter Products

Brent Diamond

## Editor in Chief

Lisa Lee Freeman

## Design Director

Timothy LaPalme

## Creative Director

Melissa Paterno Plonchak

## Deputy Editor

Susan Millar Perry

## Senior Editor

Jody L. Rohlena

## Managing Editor/Online Editor

Scott Nyerges

## Art Directors

Tammy Morton Fernandez, Julie Schrader

## Photo Editor

Karen Shinbaum

## Contributing Editor

Kenrya Rankin Naasel

## Vice President, Integrated Content Creation

Liam McCormack

## Senior Director, Content Strategy and Development

Diane Salvatore

## Autos

Mark Rechten, Editor; Jonathan Linkov, Managing Editor

## Electronics

Glenn Derene, Editor; Jerry Beilinson, Eileen McCoey, Deputy Editors

## Health & Food

Ellen Kunes, Health and Food Content Development Team Leader;

Chris Hendel, Associate Director, Health; Marvin Lipman, M.D., Medical Editor;

Orly Avitzur, M.D., Associate Medical Editor

## Home

Shax Riegler, Editor; Celia Kuperszmid Lehrman, Deputy Editor

## Money

Margot Gilman, Editor; Nikhil Hutheesing, Deputy Editor; Amanda Walker, Senior Project Editor

## Contributing Photographers

Rebekah Nemethy, Pete Pezzella, John Powers, John Walsh

## Imaging Specialists

Frank Collado, Mark Linder

## Production

Eric W. Norlander, Editorial Production Manager; Aileen McCluskey, Production Associate

## Content Operations

David Fox, Director; William Breglio, Content Production Manager

## Copy

Noreen Browne, Alison France, Wendy Greenfield, Copy Editors

## Research

Jane Healey, Associate Director; Sarah Goralski, Senior Researcher; David Schipper,

Senior Research Specialist; Kathleen Adams, Tracy Anderman, Sharon Riley, Researchers

## Administration

Decarris Bryant

## Contributing Writers

Jeff Blyskal, Susan Byrne, Dan DiClerico, Mary Farrell, Dani Forshay, Claudia Gallo,

Gordon Hard, Sari Harrar, Wendy Heppt, Ayren Jackson-Cannaday, Kimberly Janeway, Hallie Levine,

Janene Mascarella, Rachel Meltzer-Warren, Amy Roberts, Nicole Sarrubbo, David Schipper,

Donna Tapellini, Jim Travers, Zoey Washington, Catherine Winters, Genevieve Yraola



ShopSmart (ISSN 1932-3557) is published by **Consumer Reports**, an independent, nonprofit research and testing organization. We have more than 50 testing labs, a 327-acre Auto Test Center, more than 135 highly trained researchers and technicians, and more than 60 experienced reporters and editors. All independent. All dedicated only to you.

A note about prices: Generally we list the amount that we paid for the featured product.

## Violations of CR's No Commercial Use policy

Our ratings and reports may not be used in advertising. No other commercial use, including any use on the Internet, is permitted without our express written permission. Report any apparent violation at [ConsumerReports.org/NoCommercialUse](http://ConsumerReports.org/NoCommercialUse) or by mail to Consumer Reports, External Relations, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

**CR's staff** operates under contract between CR and The Newspaper Guild of New York, Local 3, The Newspaper Guild, AFL-CIO.

© 2015 Consumer Reports

**CUSTOMER SERVICE** You can contact us about your subscription by phone at 866-428-5812.





# 5 ways to shop smarter

**1** Hit the mall on July 4. The holiday weekend is perfect for serious bargain shoppers who don't want to battle crowds. Just 19 percent of people plan to shop on Independence Day this year; that's up from 14 percent last year but still light compared with other major holidays when as many as 45 percent of shoppers cram into stores, according to RetailMeNot. This weekend is a good time to find markdowns on swimsuits, clothes, barbecue supplies, and other summer gear, as well as furniture and camcorders. You can find a list of hot holiday deals at [Coupons.com](http://Coupons.com), [DealsPlus](http://DealsPlus.com), and [RetailMeNot](http://RetailMeNot.com).



## 2 Know when it pays to skip self-checkout.

In a recent survey of 62,917 shoppers, 74 percent said they use supermarket self-checkout lanes, and most called them a time-saver. If you're really in a hurry, head to Fareway, Trader Joe's, or Whole Foods. Avoid Pathmark, Waldbaum's, and Walmart, which were the slowest stores overall. The biggest gripes about self-checkout in our survey included needing help and slowpokes holding up the line.

## 3 Save your shipping boxes.

Next time you receive an online delivery, keep the box. You might be able to fill it with stuff you want to donate and have it shipped free to your local Goodwill. Go to Give Back Box to print a shipping label; it will send you a form for tax purposes. A big plus: Keeping boxes out of landfills helps the environment; Give Back Box says that shipping boxes create 30 million tons of cardboard each year. Retail supporters include Loft, Overstock, and others, but you can use any box.

## 4 Hang on to your receipts!

Bed Bath & Beyond is the latest big chain to announce a crackdown on its returns policy, following Costco and REI. BB&B will no longer take back items anytime unless you have a receipt. No receipt? You have 365 days, and for store-bought items, you will need the credit card you used in order to get a refund. Otherwise you might get hit with a 20 percent fee, plus you'll only get store credit, not a refund.

## 5 Find great dollar deals.

Love dollar stores? Then keep a lookout for new Five Below stores, which sell everything for \$1 to \$5. The stuff is bright and trendy, designed to appeal to the teen and tween market. But it's worth a stop for anyone looking for party dishes and decorations, craft supplies, sports gear (a \$5 volleyball is a steal!), or a fun new phone case or charger. Five Below has more than 300 stores so far; to go [fivebelow.com](http://fivebelow.com) to find one near you (but not to shop; you can't buy merchandise online).



## Hot new stuff

### ■ SAMSUNG GALAXY S6, ■ SAMSUNG GALAXY S6 EDGE

**Prices** Start at \$600 and \$700, respectively (without a contract)

**Why they're hot** If you're an Android fan but love the sleekness of iPhones, one of these new Samsung Galaxy models just might be your dream phone. (The main difference between the two is that the Edge has a curved display.) The glossy Gorilla Glass and polished aluminum construction look and feel a lot more iPhone-like than last year's plastic-y Galaxy S 5. And we love the cool new features, including fast charging, which can juice up about 50 percent of your battery in roughly 30 minutes. The supersharp displays and wireless charging that works almost anywhere also won us over.

**Bummers** Although Samsung's new phones are stylish, they lost points in the performance department. They scored overall on a par with the Apple iPhone 6, but the Galaxy S 5 is still the phone to beat. Both S6 versions fell a notch below their predecessor in battery life. And unlike the S 5, they have no card slot for extra memory storage, they're not water-resistant, and you can't swap out the battery.

**Where to get them** Multiple providers

The Edge's curved display looks cool but costs an additional \$100.

Both phones come in three colors: black (shown on the S6 Edge, left), gold (on the S6, below), and white.



## More hot stuff

This sleek wireless transmitter and receiver let you do away with ugly TV cable wires.



### **ACTIONTEC MYWIRELESSTV2 MULTI-ROOM WIRELESS HD VIDEO KIT**

**Price** \$199

**Why it's hot** If you have more than one TV in the house and

pay extra each month for additional set-top boxes, this gadget can pay for itself. Simply connect the transmitter to a compatible cable or satellite box, then connect the receiver to an HDTV. We tried it in our labs and in staffers' homes, and it worked great. We got HDTV streaming even on TVs with walls and doors in between. But here's the catch, and it's a biggie: You can't watch different channels, and there are limits to how far it connects.

**Where to get it** [actiontec.com](http://actiontec.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



### **WHIRLPOOL WCG97US0DS GAS COOKTOP**

**Price** \$900

**Why it's hot** This gas cooktop was one of the best—and least expensive—30-inch models we tested, edging out Bosch, Kenmore, and LG units costing at least \$200 more. It has an innovative hinged cooking surface that lifts, which makes it easier to clean than traditional cooktops with separate removable grates.

**Where to get it** Home Depot, P.C. Richard & Son

## Plus stuff you can skip



### **DYSON V6 MATTRESS HANDHELD VACUUM, \$250**

Dyson says its powerful vac is the best way to reduce allergens in mattresses. And it did suck up more stuff from testers' home mattresses than their regular vacs, but there's no way to tell how much—or what—was still in there.

**ShopSmart says** Buy a washable allergen-proof mattress cover (you can buy one for \$50 or less) and you won't need any vac, never mind a \$250 one!



### **GASWATCH TVL216 AND TVL214 DIGITAL TANK SCALES, \$25 TO \$30**

"Never run out of gas again while cooking!" That's the claim manufacturers make, and if you own a gas grill, it might sound pretty tempting. You just keep the propane tank on the scale and it will display how much is left. An alarm also signals when it's almost empty.

**ShopSmart says** They work, but you're better off just spending the money on a spare tank of propane.



## WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ... Biased bloggers

Do you look for product advice and reviews online? If the answer is yes, odds are you've read a post by someone who received the product free. Public relations reps routinely offer freebies to bloggers. (Many members of the press also get free stuff, but not us; to ensure objectivity we buy all of the stuff we review.)

The problem is, bloggers aren't always up front about free products or services they receive, not to mention payments from companies. The Federal Trade Commission's Endorsement Guides clarify exactly what info bloggers should disclose when they promote or review goods and services. According to the guides, a blogger should always disclose these three key pieces of info:

- Any connection to the product or service and

the company behind it, including whether she got it free in return for a plug.

- A truthful, not misleading, account of her experience.

- Any product benefits she can back up with proof based on her experience, as well as the typical expected results. So if her tryout of that free microwave turned out better than usual—for example, if she was able to nuke a perfectly tender and juicy steak in 2 minutes, though the average user should expect only a lukewarm mess in that time—she must also say so.

What happens if bloggers don't follow those rules? Absolutely nothing. There is no fine or any other consequence. So what are you supposed to do? Don't rely on one blogger's opinion. Scan reviews across the Internet and look for patterns.

## READER POLL



### Shopper confessions

How many different sizes of pants/skirts do you wear?

**33%** One  
**55%** Two  
**7%** Three  
**2%** Four or more

Which of these reasons best describes why you wear more than one size of clothing?

**81%** Because sizes vary so much by brand.

**11%** My weight/body shape changes.

**4%** I like some clothes to fit tighter or looser.

NOTE: Numbers don't add up to 100 percent because some readers answered "don't know." The first question was answered by 681 readers; the second, by 431.

## NOW YOU KNOW THE SCOOP ON ICE CREAM

The five brands below are rolling out more than 30 ice cream and gelato flavors this season, including those shown here. The two big themes for 2015: caramel and cookies.



**Breyers Salted Caramel frozen dairy dessert**



**Dreyer's Peanut Butter Pie frozen custard**



**Häagen-Dazs Ginger Molasses Cookie ice cream**



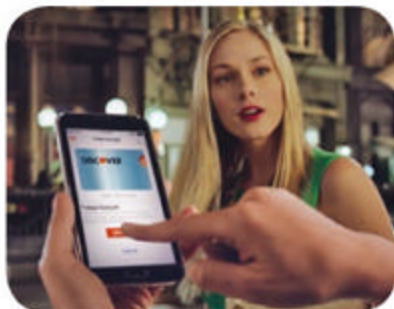
**Turkey Hill Peach Mango all natural gelato**



**Ben & Jerry's The Tonight Dough ice cream\***

\*The Tonight Dough is caramel and chocolate ice cream with chocolate cookie swirls and chocolate chip cookie dough and peanut butter cookie dough.

## is it as GOOD as it sounds?



### DISCOVER CARD FREEZE IT

**THE CLAIM** Discover Card has been advertising a new service called Freeze It that lets you “turn off” your card if it’s

misplaced or stolen, cutting off new charges and cash advances. You can do that via the free Discover Mobile app. Or you can go to *discover.com* or call Discover. (Some transactions, such as recurring bill payments, returns, and credits, will still go through.)

**THE CHECK** It’s a good tool, but there are other apps that can do more. Ondot Systems, for instance, provides software to many banks and credit unions that not only gives you control over whether your card is used but also how it’s used. If your teenager goes shopping with your card, for example, you can use the app to set the card to work at one store but not another. Or you can allow it to work in one geographic area but not another.

Like Freeze It, you can also shut down the card if it’s misplaced or stolen.

**BOTTOM LINE** Freeze It can help you prevent credit-card fraud. But find out whether your bank or credit union offers a card with the Ondot Systems service or a similar one. One bank that uses Ondot, Lone Star National Bank in McAllen, Texas, says that during the year it has been using the software, fraud losses for its credit cards have dropped by about 60 percent. If your bank doesn’t offer that kind of credit-card protection service, you can still prevent fraud by regularly checking your balances using online banking. If you spot a fraudulent transaction, call your credit-card issuer ASAP. But don’t panic—by law you can’t be liable for more than \$50.

## SILLY STUFF Look what we found this month!



### Sensations shower cap

**THE PACKAGE SAYS**

ABSORBS  
MOISTURE

#### SHOPSMART SAYS

Isn’t a shower cap supposed to REPEL moisture?



### Reassure adult diapers

**THE AD SAYS**

Reassure® Underwear for Men has a masculine design and fit with targeted protection.

Reassure® Underwear for Women are designed specifically to fit a woman securely and comfortably. Maximum absorbency.

Reassure® Underwear for Men has a masculine design and fit with targeted protection. Maximum absorbency.

#### SHOPSMART SAYS

Finally, diapers for manly men!

### YoCrunch yogurt

**THE AD SAYS**



#### SHOPSMART SAYS

Yes, there are endless ways to make yogurt unhealthy! How about bacon on top?



## SITE TO SEE

# Get the personal touch

MarkAndGraham.com

### Why you should check it out

You've probably given your share of traditional monogrammed gifts such as engraved picture frames and pens. At this website, launched by Williams-Sonoma, you can take personalization to a new level. Mark and Graham's goal is to turn a "beautiful gift into a personal gesture," and you'll find plenty of options that are up to the challenge.

In addition to the cool stuff you see pictured here, we found lots of other items that make great gifts, especially for newlyweds, grads, and new homeowners. You'll find beachy bags in colorful canvas, laser-engraved glass dinner plates, bright

leather leashes for dog walking, cozy (and sexy!) pajamas, and more.

The site is easy to use, and the gift guide tool is a good place to start; it lets you search by occasion, recipient, and price. Need a present ASAP? Head to the In a Hurry section, which is full of items that can be at your door in a week or less. And before you choose your letters, check out the Monogram Rules guide, though at this site it's easy to have fun throwing out the traditional rules and doing something unexpected. We also love that you'll never pay for monogramming, and every item is gift wrapped, gratis.

**PILLOW TALK** Have fun in bed by going beyond traditional initials.



Simple menus make it easy to personalize items in fun, fresh ways.

Shown: Bird's Beak glass carafe, \$39.



**ME, ME, ME, ME** Stack initialed Double Elle bangles, \$159 each.



**JUST SAY OMG** Add inspiration to yoga mats, which come with a carry strap for \$45.

## NEW FREE APPS TO TRY



### CITYMAPS

Create a custom map to guide you on your next vacay or a quest for the best cupcakes in town.

**Works on** Android, Apple.



### INFINIT

Use this app to send a large file to other devices seamlessly, whether it's an important work doc or a cute cat video.

**Works on** Android.



### SPYLIGHT

Sync this app with the TV show of your choice to shop for the look you see on screen (or find something similar).

**Works on** Apple.



### TILT

Go small or big: Use Tilt to collect money from your friends for a group gift or to raise funds to power your dream.

**Works on** Apple.

## Q What's the best way to get mold and mildew out of the grout in my shower?

—Dawn Marie Corrigan,  
via e-mail

When we tested tile cleaners in our labs a few years ago, we found that the best way to prevent and remove mold and mildew was to use products containing chlorine bleach, says Pat Slaven, one of our test program leaders. Comet Scratch Free Disinfection Cleanser with Bleach and Ajax with Bleach Scratch Free Cleanser are excellent on both, especially with regular use. But be sure to follow the directions about how long you should let any product work before wiping it off. You can also make your own grout cleaner at home by mixing a solution of one part chlorine bleach with 20 parts water. But when using any product containing chlorine bleach, always wear eye protection, open windows, and never mix it with anything containing ammonia. To prevent mold and mildew growth in the first place, use a squeegee to wipe down the entire shower stall and tub after every use to remove excess water, and make sure that there's enough ventilation in the bathroom to speed surface drying.



Bleach is the key ingredient in DIY grout cleaner.

### OUR PANEL



**Pat Slaven**  
test program leader



**Marvin M. Lipman**  
chief medical adviser



**Rico de Paz**  
paint tester



**Mike Bloch**  
auto tester

### VITAMINS: YES OR NO?

## Q How effective are daily multivitamins?

—Kristin Armendariz,  
via e-mail

Taking multivitamins might seem like a good idea. But the truth is that there's no proof that they provide any benefit at all for healthy people. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent group that advises the government, recently analyzed studies that included data for about 450,000 people. It found no clear evidence that multivitamins prevent cancer or heart disease, help people live longer, or make them healthier in any way. Another problem is that supplements, including multivitamins, aren't regulated in the U.S. the same way drugs are for safety or effectiveness before they go on the market. According to Marvin M. Lipman, M.D., Consumer

Reports' chief medical adviser, the best way to get all of the vitamins and minerals you need is to eat a balanced diet. That's one that includes plenty of plant foods—including whole grains, fruits, and vegetables—plus a small amount of animal-based protein. A good diet can provide such a wide range of health benefits that taking a multivitamin is unnecessary. But there are a small number of people who should take multivitamins to prevent deficiencies. They include very young and very old people who eat an extremely limited diet. If you suspect that you or someone you care for might need a multivitamin, talk with your doctor first to make sure that he or she agrees. The rest of us should skip supplements and head for the produce aisles at the supermarket instead.



## USING OLD PAINT

**Q** I need to touch up the walls in my bedroom. I kept the paint from a job several years ago. How long does paint last?

—J.R., Iowa City, Iowa

Paint can last for years or go bad in mere months, but there are no risks from using old paint as long as it's still fresh, says Rico de Paz, one of our paint testers. To preserve paint, store it in an airtight container at room temperature. Don't stash it where it can freeze or overheat (such as in a garage or a shed). If the paint has a thick, rubberlike film on the top or it doesn't mix well and stay uniformly blended for 10 to 15 minutes, it shouldn't be used. Even if the paint passes those tests, you should try it first on a piece of cardboard. Make sure that the paint still rolls and brushes out easily, that the color is uniform, and that the surface is smooth without tiny particles embedded in it.

## ERASING CAR RUST

**Q** What's the best way to touch up a rust spot on my car?

—Betty Gazaway, via e-mail

Touch-ups are usually done to cover small chips in a car's paint caused by road debris or door dings, not to cover up rust spots, says Mike Bloch, an auto tester.

If your car has patches of flaking or crumbly rust, go to a reputable auto-body shop—even for small jobs. A pro has the experience and can match your car's paint color and gloss precisely. And auto-body shops have the tools to get the best results. If you choose to do it yourself, however, here are some tips: First, make sure the touch-up color matches your car's existing paint by applying a small amount in an inconspicuous part. Before you begin touching up, clean the spot with a solvent (you can find one at auto-parts stores) that removes grease, tar, wax, and other road grit, which can prevent the paint from properly adhering to the car's surface. And be sure to color within the lines! Fill in only the damaged area—without getting paint on the nonchipped surface—so that it looks neat. Be conservative; overdoing it can turn a car with many unsightly paint chips or rust patches into a car with noticeable spots of touch-up paint on it.

## TESTING 1-2-3

A few questions for car tester **Shawn Sinclair**

### How did you become a car tester at Consumer Reports?

I started 20 years ago as the first female technician in our shop, doing things like changing oil and making alignments. Then I went to school at night to become a mechanical engineer. Now I spend most of my time between the garage and the track, evaluating everything from the fit of child seats in test cars to the latest safety features.

### What new safety features really blow you away?

The new forward-collision warning systems with automatic braking made all of us go, "Whoa!" They have the potential to save many lives. The system gives you a warning and then applies the brakes to help avoid or mitigate an imminent crash.

### What should women know about the latest cars that most of them probably don't?

In addition to all of the amazing new safety features, many models have keyless entry, which saves you from fumbling around for your keys when you're alone somewhere and want to get into your car fast. On the downside, not all new cars come with a spare tire. Instead, many models have an inflator kit, which isn't helpful if you run into trouble, like a blowout.

Which cars do women like the most and the least? To see which list the Volkswagon Jetta made, see page 76.



### GET FREE ADVICE!

Got a question about electronics, appliances, or anything else you need to buy or already own? E-mail our experts at [ShopSmart.org/questions](mailto:ShopSmart.org/questions). Letters might be edited for space and clarity. Sorry, but we can't answer every letter.

# Summer scam alert!

3 of the season's biggest rip-offs—and how to protect yourself

**W**hen the weather heats up, so do scams targeted at homeowners and vacationers looking for bargains. Here's how to spot the dirty deals:

## HOME-IMPROVEMENT SCAMS

Now that summer is in full bloom, your thoughts naturally turn to all of the around-the-house projects that need to get done. And the next thing you know a friendly contractor is knocking at your door. Well, that guy might be a home-improvement scammer. Some con artists will walk right up to your house and offer to

repair your roof, repave your driveway, or do whatever chore you need for a price that seems fair. They may say they can offer you a great deal because they're working nearby and have leftover material. They often ask for payment in advance but then do either shoddy work or none at all. It can be difficult to catch and prosecute the con artists.

### How to protect yourself

#### ■ Ask for recommendations.

Avoid contractors that contact you unsolicited. Get recommendations from friends, neighbors, or relatives.

■ **Review his past.** Before hiring someone, check his work history

with your state consumer protection agency (go to [usa.gov/directory/stateconsumer](http://usa.gov/directory/stateconsumer) for a list) and the Better Business Bureau. Search the Web using the company or individual's name and words such as "reviews" and "complaints."

■ **Check credentials.** Verify with your state that the contractor has the required license or registration.

■ **Know your rights.** Some states give you three days or so to nix home-improvement contracts. Under federal law you have three days to cancel most contracts signed in your home or outside a contractor's regular place of business.

■ **Don't rely on spoken promises.** Demand a written contract. Get all warranties in writing, too.

## BURGLAR-ALARM SCAMS

During the summer, home security and alarm companies hire traveling sales agents to go door to door making unsolicited calls, the Federal Trade Commission says. In some cases, the salespeople use high-pressure or deceptive sales tactics to get potential customers to buy expensive, and sometimes substandard, systems or equipment that they don't need.

Unscrupulous sales agents may say their offer is for a limited time only. Or, the FTC says, they might try to get you to sign a contract by telling you the equipment is free. More than likely, strings are attached. For example, to get your "free" alarm, you may have to sign a long-term and expensive system monitoring contract.

The salespeople may pressure their way into your home and refuse



**RINGER ALERT**  
Watch out for scammers posing as contractors.



**A LOT OF HOOEY**  
Don't get stuck  
renting an imaginary  
vacation property.



to leave. And they may use scare tactics. For example, they might talk about a spate of supposed burglaries in your neighborhood.

Some door-to-door sales agents target homeowners who have signs on their properties for security systems with other companies. The sales agents may state or imply that they are from your existing security company and that they're there to upgrade or replace your current security system.

#### How to protect yourself

■ **Get references.** Don't be pressured to sign a contract. Instead, ask for references and call at least two or three. Find out whether the equipment was installed within the given time frame. Were any problems dealt with satisfactorily? If there was an intrusion, were the police contacted promptly?

■ **Do a background check.** If you are told that someone is with your alarm company, call the company to verify the claim. If you're considering installing a new system, contact your state attorney general, your local consumer protection agency, and the Better Business Bureau to see whether the company has complaints on file.

■ **Request written estimates from several companies.** A reputable company will not try to sell you anything before completing a professional assessment of your needs and the layout of your home.

#### VACATION-RENTAL SCAMS

Renting someone else's home, condo, or apartment, or swapping your house with theirs, is an appealing alternative to staying in hotels and motels. But it appeals to scammers, too, who might solicit an advance payment for an imaginary property. Often those fakes can be found on listing sites such as Craigslist,

according to New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. Or you might unwittingly rent a property in foreclosure just in time for the bank to toss you out. Sometimes the rip-off comes from a renter who boosts the price or doesn't deliver what was promised. Or the property might be in an area where short-term rentals are prohibited. In New York City, for example, it's illegal to have paying guests for less than 30 days in a residential property in a multiple-unit residential dwelling, unless the property is a licensed hotel, bed-and-breakfast, or other similar business. But it's not illegal to rent a room if you occupy the property at the same time and all of the space is available to guests, according to Nolo, the legal guide publisher.

#### How to protect yourself

■ **Use a reputable listing site.** Try FlipKey, which verifies property owners, or HomeAway and VRBO, which provide a \$10,000 rental guarantee (starting at \$39) that

protects you against Internet fraud. If you use Airbnb, look for hosts that have a Verified ID badge. It indicates that they are linked to another online profile, have disclosed a phone number and an e-mail address, and/or have uploaded a government ID photo to the site. Skip properties with no reviews.

■ **Make sure it's legit.** Search online for the name of the town where you're renting and terms such as "tenant rights" and "short-term rentals."

■ **Look it over.** Use Google Earth, and Google Maps Street View, and Zillow to make sure the property resembles the pictures on the listing. Get the rental agreement in writing, and read the terms. If you don't understand something, ask the landlord to e-mail you an explanation.

■ **Pay via credit card or PayPal.** Call the landlord before sending payment, and never pay via cashier's check, Liberty Reserve, MoneyGram, Western Union, or wire transfer.

## Stay one step ahead of con artists

Keep up on the latest scams at the Federal Trade Commission site, at [consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts](http://consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts).



# Fantastic freebies

Movie tickets, beauty treatments, health screenings, tutoring, computer help, and a lot more for zilch, zero, nada!





**I**n this issue, we celebrate all things free! Prepare to be amazed by the variety of cool stuff you can get for zero dollars. We're talking boxes of Krispy Kremes, car checkups, skin-care consultations, and a lot more. Our favorite sites for great giveaways include Free Sample Monkey, Hey It's Free, and Pinch Me. Some new freebie-finders we also like include the Freebie app (free for Android and Apple), which lets you redeem offers for posting about partnering companies on your social networks, and the Free Stuff Times app (free for Android, Apple, and Windows), which makes it easy to find, register for, and share offers on your phone or tablet. And there's the freebies thread on Reddit, which uses the power of the crowd to vote on the most interesting offers. For more freebies, as well as services offered at a giant discount through schools—including dental work, eye exams and even facials—see page 22.

## Tune up your car, your computer, and yourself!

**SKIN-CARE CONSULTS** Some CVS drugstores have in-house Healthy Skincare Centers. If there's one near you (find out at [cvs.com/shopbrand/healthy-skin-centers](http://cvs.com/shopbrand/healthy-skin-centers)), you can schedule a complimentary consultation to find out about your skin type and condition, and about products to complement it. Bonus: You'll leave the store with free samples.

**CAR CHECKUPS** Sign up for the free Pep Boys Rewards program and stop by any location for free services. Mechanics will test your battery, install windshield wipers, track down the source of a check-engine light, and inspect your brakes. You can also get your brakes inspected free at Meineke shops.

**HEALTH SCREENINGS** Rite Aid, Sam's Club, Target, Walgreens, and other retailers provide free screenings for things like blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, and body-fat percentage. Check websites for details. Also, the American Kidney Fund runs

free kidney-disease screenings around the country; find one near you at [kidneyfund.org/are-you-at-risk/get-tested](http://kidneyfund.org/are-you-at-risk/get-tested). And Mental Health America offers online screenings for anxiety, depression, and other conditions.

**COMPUTER TUNE-UPS** Laptop moving slowly? Download the free PC program from [officedepot.com](http://officedepot.com) to help speed things up.

**TUTORING** For students in U.S. military families, grades K through 12, Tutor.com provides around-the-clock homework help. Also, Khan Academy has instructional videos and quizzes to reinforce lessons for every grade level in the arts, computing, the humanities, math, science, and a lot more. It's for anyone.

**BEAUTY TREATMENTS** Aveda stores often offer facials and hair treatments. Some are free; others require a donation, which can be applied toward a purchase. Check [aveda.com/events/index.tmpl](http://aveda.com/events/index.tmpl) for an event near you.

**FAXES** No matter how high-tech the world gets, the frustrating fact is that some companies still require you to fax in information. You can save trees and frustration by using an online service such as FaxZero.com, which lets you send or receive a limited number of pages free, right from your home computer.

**VETERINARY EXAMS** Your new pet's first checkup is free at your local VCA

Animal Hospital. Get a coupon at [vcahospitals.com/main/offer](http://vcahospitals.com/main/offer).

**TAX PREP** The Internal Revenue Service offers free tax help for anyone who makes \$53,000 or less per year, has a disability, is elderly, or speaks limited English. You can find a local provider via [irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep](http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep). If you prefer to do your taxes yourself, H&R Block's Free Edition comes with

free unlimited advice from an expert, via phone or chat, and includes a once-over before you hit "send."

**WI-FI ACCESS** Tons of businesses now offer free Wi-Fi. Apple, FedEx Office, McDonald's, and Target are a few of the biggies. Use apps including WiFi Map (free for Android and Apple) and Free Zone Free WiFi Scanner (Android only) to connect around town.

### Get the perfect fit

Need a hem?

Athleta (dresses, pants, and skirts), Lands' End (pants), and Lululemon (pants and tops) will do it free. Saks Fifth Avenue will alter some full-price garments, as will Banana Republic and J.Crew as long as you paid with a store card.





# Grab a guru or two

**HOME-RENOVATION EXPERTS** Sign up for Home Depot workshops to learn from experts how to do all kinds of handy DIY projects, such as creating a hanging herb garden and repairing drywall.

**CHEFS** Sign up your kids for Williams-Sonoma's free Junior Chef classes (creating taco toppings—yum!) or enroll yourself in grown-up sessions, such as grilling basics.

**CRAFTING PROS** Lowe's Build and Grow clinics will guide your little person in making her own wooden creations. Home Depot offers a similar program for budding DIYers. Staffers at Michaels conduct free crafting classes for all ages (you just buy the supplies). And there are free online seminars at [creativebug.com/categories/free-classes](http://creativebug.com/categories/free-classes).

**JOCKS** Bass Pro Family Summer Camp workshops ([basspro.com/summercamp](http://basspro.com/summercamp)) teach young sports fans outdoor skills, including archery, fishing, and kayaking.

**MODEL BUILDERS** Head to your local store for the Lego Monthly Mini Model Build, or download instructions at [shop.lego.com/en-US/MiniBuilds](http://shop.lego.com/en-US/MiniBuilds) to create a model at home.

**COMPUTER GEEKS** Apple stores offer workshops covering everything from taking

better pics with your iPhone to using the cloud to making movies. Microsoft stores also offer free workshops and events. Check company websites for details.

**BEER AND WINE CONNOISSEURS** The grocery chain Wegmans offers complimentary in-store events, including beer-brewing classes and wine tastings.

**CAMPERS** Head to an REI store to learn outdoorsy skills both fun (the basics of stand-up paddleboarding) and practical (how to prepare meals when you're camping).

**SELF-DEFENSE COACHES** SEPS (the Situation Effective Protection System) offers an online self-defense program for women with the goal of teaching you how to "predict, prevent, identify, and avoid violence." Get started at [womensselfdefense-seps.com](http://womensselfdefense-seps.com).

**EXERCISE TRAINERS** The November Project ([november-project.com](http://november-project.com)) organizes free classes across the country. The Nike+ Training Club app (free for Android and Apple) has more than 100 workouts created by trainers that enable you to work with friends so that you can motivate each other. And Workout Meetups is a great way to join a fitness group online for runs, tai chi, and other workouts. Also, Athleta and Lululemon offer free classes.



## Master the smoky eye

Join Sephora's free Beauty Insider program and take in-store classes to learn makeup techniques such as contouring or how to create two different smoky eyes, one for day and one for night.

## 'NO RISK' FREE TRYOUTS THAT CAN COST YOU

Lots of companies offer those deals, including totally legit ones. For example, if you want to sample the selection at Hulu Plus, give SiriusXM satellite radio a listen, or find out whether Amazon Prime is worth it, you can sign up for a monthlong free trial. Sure, there's fine print (more about that on page 21). But the biggest catch is usually this: If you don't cancel before your free trial is up, the company will usually start charging you automatically. To avoid running into that problem, take these four steps before you sign up:

**Find out how to cancel.** It's always easy to figure out how to sign up. No surprise there! But some services bury the instructions for how to cancel. And some of them require you to cancel over the phone even if you enrolled online.

**See what you can keep.** If the trial involves the company shipping you something, check to see whether you have to send it back if you cancel—and whether you have to pay for return shipping. Stipulations like that might make the freebie not worth it.

**Watch the calendar.** Don't assume that you have until the end of the trial period to cancel. Sometimes there's a different deadline hidden in the fine print. Also, if your trial is set to end over a weekend or on a holiday, cancel ahead of time in case there are processing delays.

**Set a calendar reminder.** It's easy to forget when your trial is scheduled to end. Make a note on your calendar a week or so before, and also set an alarm on your phone to remind you.

## Catch a buzz

Drink up on National Coffee Break Day. On Sept. 29, Dunkin' Donuts, Krispy Kreme, McDonald's, and other coffee stops are all about the free cuppas.



## A really free lunch—and dessert, too

**BIRTHDAY EATS** Sign up for freebies well in advance of your birthday to clean up on your special day. Go to [heyitsfree.net/birthday-freebies](http://heyitsfree.net/birthday-freebies) and [freebie-depot.com/birthday-freebie-list](http://freebie-depot.com/birthday-freebie-list) for offers. They include a free lunch at Au Bon Pain, a treat from Rita's Italian Ice, and lots more. And it's not all about food. For example, Redbox has free one-night movie rentals, and Brunswick bowling centers will let kids bowl two free games. You might need proof of age to claim offers, so don't forget to bring ID.

**KIDS' MEALS** Scan [mykidseatfree.com](http://mykidseatfree.com) and [outtoeatwithkids.com](http://outtoeatwithkids.com) to find out where you can score free meals for your little ones. The Kids Meal Deals app (free for Android, Apple, and BlackBerry) will help you find freebies on the go.

**ICE CREAM** On Carvel's Free Cone Day (it was April 30 this year), you get a junior cone just for asking. Participating Ben & Jerry's also host a free cone day in early spring each year; so do Häagen-Dazs scoop shops in

May. (Yeah, we know it's a ways off, but mark your calendars now so you don't forget!)

**DOUGHNUTS** Walk into a Krispy Kreme on Sept. 19 and give your best pirate-like "Argh!" to score a free doughnut. Dress up as a pirate and you'll get a free dozen.

**RESTAURANT APPETIZERS** Signing up for restaurant rewards programs can net you free eats. TGI Fridays will send you a coupon good for an appetizer or dessert, California

Pizza Kitchen gives new members a free dish, and the Green Turtle serves up an appetizer valued at \$9.99 or less.

**CHOCOLATE** Join the Godiva Rewards Club and get a free sweet treat at participating stores each month.

**PRETZELS** Say a tongue twister at the counter of any Pretzelmaker location on April 26 and get a free soft pretzel.

**VETERANS DAY DEALS** On Nov. 11, military personnel can enjoy all-you-can-eat hotcakes at Bob Evans, dinner at the Olive Garden, and more. See [dealspl.us](#).

**TAX-DAY TREATS** Some companies try to take the sting out of April 15. This year, we saw free Whoppers from Burger King, free cookies at Great American Cookies, free chips and queso at California Tortilla, and others. Check [taxdayfreebies.com](#).

## Let you entertain you!

**ACTIVITIES** In the last issue of ShopSmart, we listed loads of free entertainment options. Here's a quick recap of some of the websites:

- **Parks:** [nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparks.htm](#)
- **Bowling:** [kidsbowlfree.com](#)
- **Campsites:** [Freecampsites.net](#)

**SONGS AND TV SHOWS** Check out all of the stuff you can get free in iTunes. On your computer, click on "Free on iTunes," which is on the right side of the screen, to access it. On your phone, just look for the blue graphic. (Also see page 74 for great podcasts to check out.)

**APPS** Google Play and the iTunes Store have charts of the most downloaded free apps. Check [play.google.com/store/apps/collection/topselling\\_free?hl=en](#) and [apple.com/itunes/charts/free-apps](#) to be sure you're not missing out on anything.

**PAPER AND AUDIOBOOKS** Many libraries offer free entertainment that you can stream, in addition to the traditional hard copies of books and movies. Search [overdrive.com](#) to see whether your local

library branch is set up for audio and video services. Also, check out [gutenberg.org](#), [loyalbooks.com](#), and [openlibrary.org](#) for free public-domain titles, and [manybooks.net](#) for links to additional free e-book downloads.

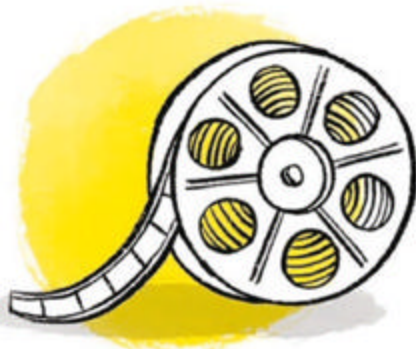
**MUSIC** If you're bored with the radio and haven't tried streaming services yet, you're missing out. Good ones with free listening options include Live365 (hear user-created stations), Pandora (create stations based on your favorite songs and artists), Slacker (listen to curated playlists or create your own), Songza (listen to playlists arranged by moods and activities), and Spotify (play albums or playlists).

**CULTURAL EVENTS** Target regularly hosts no-cost events around the country. Search [target.com](#) for local listings. Examples include admission to the Atlanta Children's Museum, concerts at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and story time at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts.

**OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHTS** Check with your city for dates when you can enjoy films under the stars in a local park.

## See it first

Score tickets for movie screening at [advancescreenings.com](#) and [gofobo.com](#).



## FREEBIE DO'S AND DON'TS

We all love free stuff but we like our privacy, too. And to get freebies, you often have to share your name, contact info, birthday, and sometimes more. Here's how to make sure you don't give up too much of your personal info:

**DO** squint at the fine print so that you understand how your data will be used and whom it might be shared with.

**DO** create an e-mail address just for free offers, so that spam doesn't fill your regular account.

**DON'T** use your full name if you don't have to. Try using your initials or even an alias.

**DON'T** reveal your birthday; it's key info for ID thieves. Choose a "birthday" you'll remember and use it instead.

**DO** uncheck any checked boxes committing you to e-mail newsletters or other things you don't want.

**DON'T** pay a shipping or handling fee that sounds like it's more than the item is worth.

**DON'T** be a sucker. If you receive a notice that you've won a contest you didn't enter, you can bet there's a catch. Check companies with the Better Business Bureau, and never hand over money without knowing what you're agreeing to (sitting through a time-share presentation, for example).

**DO** use a credit card rather than a debit card for services that require payment info—say, a free trial. That will make it easier for you to stop payment if there's any funny business after you cancel. Check your statements for a few months after to be sure you're not still being charged.

**DO** report shady companies to [ftccomplaintassistant.gov](#).



# Free haircuts?

Well, almost! You can also book super-cheap facials, dental work, and eye exams.



**D**ying for a massage but don't want to pay sky-high spa prices? Or maybe your kid needs braces and you don't have the dough. If you're willing to be a bit brave and put yourself in the hands of a student, you can often get pro-quality services at super-low prices—or even free! That's because students need to practice and perfect the techniques they have learned on actual people. We dug around to find all of the things you can get students to do for you, what to expect from a trade-school experience, and where to find one in your area. Give schools a try and you'll get an A+ in bargain shopping!

## Salon services

**What you can get** A trim, layers, highlights, a special-occasion updo—you name it and a student is probably learning it at a cosmetology school near you. In addition to haircuts and color, most beauty schools also offer manicures and pedicures.

**What you'll pay** Usually around \$10 for a cut and \$25 for color. Some schools offer package deals. For example, the Bella Institute in Portland, Ore., had a prom package (updo, manicure, and makeup application) for \$22. The Marinello Schools of Beauty (in California, Connecticut, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Utah) offer bridal-party packages and other special-occasion deals. And you don't have to be going to an event to get those prices.

**Where to go** Check with your local cosmetology school or see whether your salon offers training sessions.

**What to expect** Cosmetology schools offer basic training to students who want to become stylists. Usually, anyone can book an appointment, and you can probably ask for the style you want. Expect to pay a reduced fee for the services. On the other hand, if you go to a training session, you typically don't have to pay, but you can't specify what you want. Those sessions are usually more structured, with experienced stylists there to learn new techniques and stay up to date on trends. Each stylist will need a hair model, and if that's you, your cut, color, and styling will probably be free. But the schools are usually looking for a certain type of hair, and you'll need to go through some type of screening process to get in.

**Questions you must ask** Can I ask for the style I want? Can I reject a cut the student suggests or do I have to let her do what she wants? Will she fix it if I'm not happy? The less you pay, the less control you probably have over the outcome.

## Massages

**What you can get** A massage, full-body or focusing on specific areas, by a massage-school student.

**What you'll pay** Usually around \$25 to \$35. Occasionally, you'll find schools that offer free massages, but that's rare.

**Where to go** See whether there's a school in your area by checking the directory at [massageschool.org](http://massageschool.org). (It's a site designed to help students find a program, but it's also an easy way to search for schools.)

**What to expect** The massages will

probably be a student-training session supervised by an instructor. Most schools will not let you specify whether you'd prefer a male or female therapist or accommodate other special requests. Schools do try to create an experience that's close to the real deal, but don't expect the same atmosphere or frills of a high-end spa. A school might also be a good option if you have special medical needs. An instructor at one massage school we spoke to says that their students do therapeutic work with people who have various ailments and disabilities.

**Questions you must ask** What's the setting like? Will my massage take place in a cubicle? Will a teacher be coaching the student? Will others be observing? If a private and soothing spa atmosphere is important to you, it might be tough to relax in a massage-school setting.

## Fancy meals

**What you can get** Gourmet food for a fraction of what you'd pay in a nice restaurant. Most culinary schools change their menus seasonally so that students get used to working with the freshest ingredients. Often you'll get a prix fixe menu, though sometimes you can order a la carte or enjoy a buffet. And some schools have specialty storefronts, such as a bakery.

**What you'll pay** A prix fixe menu usually costs around \$25 for three courses. Buffet prices may be similar; a la carte prices vary.

**Where to go** Search for cooking schools and culinary institutes in your area and see whether they have a restaurant that's open to the public.

**What to expect** Many of the people training at culinary schools want to work in fine-dining establishments, so the level of service is intended to be similar to that of high-end restaurants. Also, expect interesting dishes (so skip it if you're a super-picky eater). "Students are often challenged to use their creativity to come up with interesting meals and presentations," says Stephan Hengst of the Culinary Institute of America. Not all

schools serve wine with their meals, but some are training future sommeliers.

**Questions you must ask** Do I need to make a reservation? Is there a dress code? What is your tipping policy? Due to IRS regulations, students are not permitted to accept tips, but some restaurants will include a service charge. The amount will often go back into the program or to scholarships, but you may want to ask where it's going. If you tip extra for exceptional service, it's probably not going to your server.

## Eye exams

**What you can get** An eye exam or a fitting for glasses or contact lenses, and treatments for dry eyes. Some optometry schools also offer eye surgery, such as laser vision correction. And some programs will even treat emergencies, but that's something you probably want to research in advance of an actual situation.

**What you'll pay** It depends on what you need and where you go, but we found comprehensive eye exams for \$102. (Fees are often less for low-income patients.) Also ask about insurance; schools might take it, as well as Medicaid and Medicare.

**Where to go** See whether you have an optometry or ophthalmology school nearby, and look on its website to see what services are available to the public. A representative of the Optometry School at the University of California, Berkeley, told us their students are using the latest technology. Knowing that might help offset any nerves about going to a school for your eye needs.

**What to expect** Sometimes students do



## Dress the part

When you book a reservation at a local cooking school, be sure to ask whether there's a dress code. Some campus restaurants have one as part of their presentation as a nice restaurant.

the exams and fittings; they're usually the lowest-priced options. Some clinics also have licensed optometrists on staff offering services for a lesser discount.

**Questions you must ask** Who will perform the service, a student or a faculty member? Will others be looking on? Can I expect follow-up care? (If you're having surgery such as laser vision correction, keep in mind that it usually requires postoperative care. If the school doesn't provide it, you'll need to follow up with a doctor.) Do I need a consultation before I return for treatment, and is there a charge for that? (Most schools require a free consultation first.) Can I buy eyeglasses or contact lenses there? Or can I buy glasses elsewhere and come there to have them fitted?

## Dental work

**What you can get** Services vary by school, but at the very least you'll be able to receive a basic cleaning or have a cavity filled. At a specialized program, you can get root canal surgery or other oral surgery, as well as dental implants. And some schools also offer pediatric services and braces.

**What you'll pay** It depends on the service. At one school we checked, a routine cleaning by a dental student costs \$50. Some schools offer a sliding scale to patients, and some programs accept insurance. If you sign up to be a patient at a dental board exam, you can get services free—and maybe even get paid. Exam procedures vary, but typically you'll get a free screening exam and X-rays to

determine whether you qualify. If you do, you'll get a free cleaning or fillings on exam day. Dental boards are scheduled only a couple of times per year, so make sure you'll be available on those dates before you go through the qualification process.

**Where to go** Check websites for local dental schools; most will have a tab for patients. Clinics like the one at the University of California in San Francisco see almost 40,000 patients each year.

**What to expect** You can get the same services as you get at a regular dentist's office, only with a student doing the work and faculty members and maybe other students looking on. If you're not comfortable with a less-experienced student working on your teeth, you can look for a postgraduate or faculty clinic. You'll pay more, but rates are still less than what some dentists charge. We spoke to a professor at a top dental school, who said that advanced services, such as dental implants, are what really pay off. You'll be paired with an experienced student pursuing advanced training and using the latest techniques. Dental schools are also a great deal if your child needs traditional braces.

**Questions you must ask** Do I need an evaluation before my appointment? Will I need X-rays, and is there an additional charge for them? How long will the procedure take? (A simple cleaning could take around 3 hours in a student clinic. Going to a graduate or faculty clinic can probably reduce your time to about an hour.) Do you have dental board exams coming up?

## See your way to new glasses

Some optometry schools offer eye exams, but not all of them sell glasses. Make sure you leave with a prescription so that you can fill it elsewhere.



## WHEN TO SKIP THE SCHOOLS

Trade schools can be a great way to save money or try something new, but they're not right for everyone. Be sure to weigh cost vs. convenience before you sign up. Here are some examples of when the trade-offs might not be worth it:

### IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME.

Hair color or a dental exam could take up to 3 hours. Make sure the additional time is worth the money you'll save. You might also have to wait longer to get an appointment at a school.

### IF ATMOSPHERE IS IMPORTANT.

You probably won't find the niceties of a spa, salon, or a doctor's office at a school.

### IF CROWDS MAKE YOU

**UNCOMFORTABLE.** That's why it's important to find out how many people will be present during your appointment. Just a student and a teacher? Or will there be a room full of observers gaping at you? Ask in advance and make sure you're OK with the environment.

### IF THE SCHOOL DOESN'T TAKE YOUR INSURANCE.

Many dental and optometry clinics will accept insurance. If they don't, you'll need to figure out which is the better deal—the school (where you'll have to pay the whole bill out of pocket) or a practitioner who takes your insurance (where you might be responsible for a co-pay or a portion of the bill).

**IF YOU HAVE KIDS.** There are pediatric dental schools and cosmetology schools that will cut children's hair, but some schools are for adults only. If the school does take little ones, make sure that yours can handle the extra time in the chair and the number of observers in the room.



# Buying Guide

The best from our tests

700 PRODUCTS TESTED  120 SMART PICKS

Don't count on the Off Citronella Bucket—in our tests, it didn't make mosquitoes bug off. Instead, try this household item on page 54 that you probably already own.

**HOME  
& YARD**  
p. 27

**FOOD  
& DRINK**  
p. 37

**HEALTH  
& SAFETY**  
p. 47

**BEAUTY  
& FASHION**  
p. 57

**CARS  
& TECH**  
p. 67

# ConsumerReports®

## Build & Buy Car Buying Service

Consumer Reports subscribers can save both time and money with the **Consumer Reports Build & Buy Car Buying Service**. Compare multiple dealers online and know what you should pay before visiting a dealership.



**Negotiation-free  
guaranteed savings  
off MSRP\***



**Transparent  
car buying  
process**



**Consumer Reports  
recommendation for  
qualified vehicles**



**Nationwide  
network of  
dealers**

Subscribers have  
saved an average of  
**\$2,990**  
off MSRP\*\*



## See your savings!

**[www.ConsumerReports.org/cr/carsavings614ss](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/cr/carsavings614ss)**

\* Guaranteed Savings not available in all states. In these states, a "Target Price" is presented, which reflects a market-based example of what you can reasonably expect to pay for a vehicle with your desired options. Savings is guaranteed by the dealer and not Consumer Reports or TrueCar. Guaranteed Savings may not be available on select models or trims. See site for details.

\*\* Between 4/1/14 and 6/30/14, the average estimated savings off MSRP presented by TrueCar Certified Dealers to users of the Consumer Reports Build & Buy Car Buying Service based on users who configured virtual vehicles and subsequently purchased a new vehicle of the same make and model listed on the certificate from Certified Dealers, was \$2,990 including applicable vehicle specific manufacturer incentives. Your actual savings may vary based on multiple factors including the vehicle you select, region, dealer, and applicable vehicle specific manufacturer incentives which are subject to change. The Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price ("MSRP") is determined by the manufacturer, and may not reflect the price at which vehicles are generally sold in the dealer's trade area as not all vehicles are sold at MSRP. Each dealer sets its own pricing. Your actual purchase price is negotiated between you and the dealer. Neither TrueCar nor Consumer Reports brokers, sells or leases motor vehicles. Service not available in Canada.





**CHILL CONTROL**  
An extra drawer on this LG can be set at different temperatures for different foods.



## Cool fridge trends

How the latest models keep food fresh longer

**C**an a new fridge help you eat healthier? Well, we wouldn't go that far. But the latest, greatest models might help you cut down on wasted produce that ends up smooshed, rotten, and forgotten on a back shelf or bottom drawer.

Many new fridge features are designed to keep food fresher longer. They include produce-preserving filters, humidity-regulating drawers, and convertible

compartments that switch from fridge to freezer mode. We found those food-storage innovations on some of the top-performing models in our tests.

To earn top scores, refrigerators have to be energy-efficient and keep temperatures consistent, which can also help keep food fresher. Turn the page to get a peek inside some of the best new models. If you're not ready to buy a new fridge, see page 30 for clever ways to upgrade your old icebox.



# 4 new features you'll love

## Extra doors that keep cold air from escaping

If your family uses the fridge a lot, you might appreciate a hidden door-in-door compartment. It allows you easy access to go-to staples without letting food-preserving cold air escape from the main compartment. The feature has become popular on French-door fridges but is showing up on other models, too.

Smart Picks with door-in-door compartments: Samsung RH29H8000SR, \$2,500 (shown at far right); Kenmore Elite 74033, \$3100 (shown at near right); and LG LFX32945ST, \$3,330.



Samsung is the first to offer a hidden door on a side-by-side model.



## Humidity and temperature controls on drawers

Many crispers now have controls that maintain optimum humidity to keep produce fresher. (Fruits that ripen quickly tend to need low humidity, and veggies that easily wilt generally need high humidity.) Certain models also have temperature-controlled compartments that can be set cooler than the rest of your fridge, which can come in handy when, say, chilling drinks for a party.

This model has a compartment that switches from fridge to freezer, which can increase fresh-food storage.



Smart Picks with temperature-controlled drawers: Samsung Chef Collection RF34H9960S4, \$5,400 (shown at left and above left); Kenmore Elite 72483, \$3,600 (shown above right); and LG LMXS30746S, \$2,850 (shown on previous page).



## Special cooling systems

Traditional fridges with one evaporator exchange airflow with the freezer, which can dry things out, causing crisper drawers to lose moisture. New dual-evaporator cooling systems maintain the two sections separately. Our tests have found that two evaporators are better than one at maintaining optimal humidity in the fridge chamber, which can help food stay at its peak of freshness longer. This setup also prevents odors from migrating between the freezer and fridge sections, so your ice cubes won't taste like salmon or other stinky foods.

Smart Picks with dual evaporators: GE Profile PWE23KMDES, \$2,600 (shown at near right and far right); and Whirlpool WRX988SIBM, \$2,600.



Two evaporators are better than one at keeping food-friendly humidity levels.



## Produce preservers

Beyond humidity controls, even more advanced features are showing up on crisper drawers. For example, Kenmore's AirTight Crisper is designed to delay wilting thanks to a special gasket and dimpled surface that the company claims helps retain moisture in produce. Certain KitchenAid and Whirlpool models have a filter in the crisper that is claimed to absorb the ripeness-speeding ethylene gas that many fruits and veggies give off—as long as you replace the filter every six months.

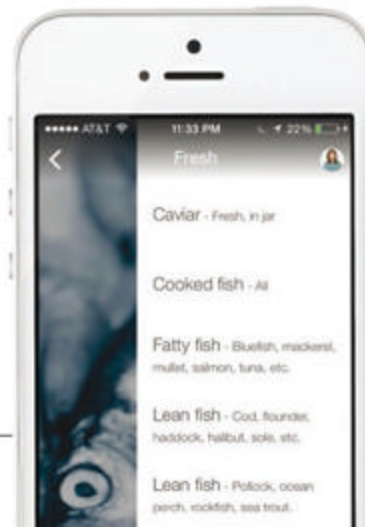
Smart Picks with enhanced crisper drawers: Kenmore Elite 74093, \$3,400 (shown at near right); and KitchenAid KBFS22ECMS, \$1,800 (shown above and at far right).



KitchenAid claims its Produce Preserver extends food freshness up to 25 percent. Refill packets cost \$7.

## Where *not* to put your apples

Before you unload your next bag of groceries, check out the FoodKeeper app. It will tell you to keep ethylene-producing apples separate from ethylene-sensitive broccoli and lots of other great tips. The truth is that even if your fridge is tricked out with the latest features, proper food storage is key. One manufacturer told us that high-tech freshness features wouldn't even be necessary if people followed good storage practices. The app, developed by the Department of Agriculture with Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute, works on Android and Apple devices.





# Organize your food!

## 7 products that help get fridge clutter under control

If you have a bad case of fridge envy after reading about all of those cool new features but you're not ready to shell out for a new appliance, check out these organizers. They can help you give your fridge a makeover so that it's neater and easier to find stuff. But before you buy anything, declutter your fridge the same way you would your closet or any space, says Donna Smallin, author of "Clear the Clutter, Find Happiness" (Storey, 2014). Take everything out and pitch stuff that's expired or unlikely to be eaten. Next, think about how you use what's left. "Group like items together, and keep the foods you use most at eye level," says Cynthia Lindsey, a professional organizer in the Nashville, Tenn., area. Now you're ready to shop!



### Bottle and can stacker

To keep soda cans or bottles from hogging prime shelf space, lay them on their sides in a bottle stacker. Ridges will prevent items from rolling around and make it easy for you to stack them.

Shown: Fridge Monkey bottle stacking mat, \$7, [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com).

### Lazy Susan

If you've ever lost something in the depths of your refrigerator, or if you have trouble reaching the back of a shelf, buy a revolving tray. "I came up with the idea of using a lazy Susan in the refrigerator as my grandmother got older," Smallin says. "It made it so much easier for her to access things from the front of the fridge."

Shown: InterDesign Fridge Binz 11.5-inch turntable, \$20, [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com).



Look for raised sides to keep tall items from tipping over and to contain spills.



### Containers and bins

Small things, such as yogurt cartons and condiment jars, can easily disappear behind bigger items. To keep them visible and within easy reach, add a few containers. You can repurpose any storage bins you have on hand or look for specialty refrigerator bins in home-goods stores. "I have a bin for yogurts and another for my daughter's snacks," Lindsey says. "They're great for anything small or irregularly shaped." If your fridge doesn't have a deli drawer, invest in a low, lidded container for deli meats and cheeses.

Shown: Fridge Binz, \$8 to \$20, and rectangular Klip-It food storage, \$2.50 to \$13, [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com).





## Produce bags

If your fridge's fruit and veggie compartments are not so much "crispers" as drawers, you might be able to extend the life of produce with produce bags. "Just put your clean veggies or herbs in the bags, fold the top over, and put them in the refrigerator drawer," Smalin says. "I've found they extend the life of most things by about a week."

Shown: Evert Fresh Green Bags, \$20 for 30 bags, [evertfresh.com](http://evertfresh.com).

Cutting boards can help you color-code and group items.



## Flexible cutting mats

Have an older fridge with wire shelves? Line the shelves with flexible cutting mats to create a smooth, wobble-free surface. The mats are also easy to pull out and wipe clean if anything drips.

Shown: MIU flexible cutting boards, \$10 for a five-pack, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Use wire baskets in the freezer to allow air circulation and avoid frost build-up.



## Labels

Once you've organized your shelves by category and filled bins and containers, label everything. Look for erasable labels that you can move and remove without leaving residue behind. Then you can easily update the label if, say, the bin you use for squeezable fruit packs this year becomes the deli bin next year.

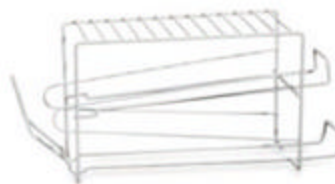
Shown: Erasable food-storage label starter kit, \$10, [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com).

## Freezer baskets

Even if you have a brand-new fridge with a big freezer compartment, you may find that it can easily become a black hole of frozen peas and ancient ice cream. Your best find-anything strategy is to divide the space into smaller compartments with wire baskets.

Shown: Freezer storage baskets, \$6 to \$8, [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com).

## What to skip



### CAN DISPENSER

"It holds soda cans horizontally; as you pull one out, another one rolls forward, but it only saves space if the dispenser is full," Lindsey says. "If it's only holding a can or two, it's taking up more space than it saves."



### EGG ORGANIZER

This might seem like a good way to protect your eggs, but the carton is the best place to store them. That way you can keep an eye on expiration dates—and you can stack one on top of another. Just be sure to store eggs in the coldest part of the fridge, not the door, where temperatures can fluctuate.


# Keep cool for less

## 5 things you can do now to slash energy costs

**T**he warmer weather is finally here, and so are those shocking summer electricity bills. There's actually a lot you can do to cut them down to size without sacrificing comfort. If you have central air, you can raise the thermostat a few degrees so that you're not fully cooling your home when you're not around. Also, clear leaves and other debris from around

the outdoor unit, and make sure shrubs and plants aren't blocking the airflow. If you rely on window A/C units, consider buying efficient new models. Many have timers so that you can set them to start before you get home.

Check out the A/C model on the facing page and other products we recommend to keep you cool and on budget all summer long.




Smooth blades tend to be quieter than ones with textured designs.

Shown: Bistro ceiling fan, \$289, [restorationhardware.com](http://restorationhardware.com).\*

### Become a fan of ceiling fans

Combining a ceiling fan with your A/C can save you money. With the fan on you should be able to raise the A/C's temperature by 4° F. That spreads cooled air through your room without cranking up your power use.



Keep in mind that a fan cools you, not the room, so turn it off when you leave.

The GE ADEW50LR (sold at Walmart), \$200, is energy-efficient and excellent at water removal. It also has auto restart if the power goes off.



## Banish humidity

A dehumidifier can take that sticky feeling out of a damp space and help prevent the buildup of mold- and mildew-breeding moisture. Plus, models (like the one above) that meet new federal energy standards can save you big on your electricity bills.



You can buy these Andersen 400 Series windows with sun-blocking glass.

## Put sun blockers on your windows

Energy-efficient windows and/or coverings such as drapes, blinds, shades, and heat-reflecting transparent films can prevent the sun's rays from warming up your home when temperatures rise.

The GE AEM05LS, \$210, is great at cooling small rooms.



## Pick the right size A/C

If your unit is too small, it will struggle to keep a comfy temp; if it's too big, it will cool a room too quickly without removing enough humidity. The LG LW1214ER, \$350, is top-rated in our tests for large rooms (350 to 650 square feet), and the LG LW8014ER, \$240, is a great choice for medium rooms (250 to 400 square feet).

The Panasonic Inverter NN-H965BF, \$180, is big enough to hold a 9x15-inch baking dish, and it got top scores in cooking evenness.



## Heat up your food, not the whole house

On warmer days, keep the heat out of your home by using your microwave instead of the oven. The best ones use 30 to 80 percent less energy than ovens.



# Frozen assets

## The perfect ice for every drink

**O**versized cubes, spheres, and other fun ice shapes are popular at fancy bars and restaurants, and they're easy to make at home. Larger cubes not only look cool, but they also melt more slowly than smaller ones, preventing drinks from becoming waterlogged too quickly. You can try the trend with the specialty trays and molds shown here; you might even have some nice ice shapers on hand. And if you love those machine-made crystal-clear cubes at the store, you can easily make them yourself, too. See the trick on the facing page.



Large spheres are great for scotch and other drinks you don't want waterlogged.

Shown: Spherical ice set, \$18, [momastore.org](http://momastore.org).



For ice-cold shots, forget the glassware and go for glasses made of ice. This silicone mold pops out four fully formed frozen shot glasses.

Shown: FineLife Icy Shots 12-piece set, \$12.50, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



### Always running low on cubes?

Check out these bottom-freezer fridges with dual icemakers: the Samsung RF30HDEDTSR, \$3,000, and the LG LFXS29766S, \$3,400. They have icemakers up top for easy access as well as in the bottom freezer section. Both got high marks from our testers.

For colorful and tasty summer drinks, use this no-spill covered tray to make extra-large cubes to encase berries, cherries, or lemon or orange slices.

Shown: Lekue ice cube tray, \$18, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



**PUNCH IT UP** The classic party drink is back! Restaurants are serving it to diners to share, and it's really easy to make. The trick is to use a giant piece of slow-melting ice—made of water or fruit juice—so the punch doesn't lose any, well, punch.

For a really giant sphere, fill a balloon with water and freeze, then peel it away.

Turn a hunk of ice into sculpture by freezing water or juice in a bundt pan.

## MAKE IT CLEAR

The secret to perfectly clear ice is boiling the water before freezing it. That gets rid of trapped gasses, which can cause cloudiness in the center of cubes. If you really want to make sure your ice is as see-through as possible, start with distilled water—but still boil it first. Preparing ice that way not only looks nice but also creates denser crystals, which make slower-melting cubes. To keep your ice fresh, take the frozen cubes out of the tray and store them in freezer bags. That will keep ice tasting fresh and also keep it from shrinking.

To make one huge ice block, simply cut the top off a half-gallon milk or juice carton, fill it with water or juice, then freeze.

# Home news

## Get the party started for \$12 or less

Cute and colorful garlands and other summery touches are a great way to get your guests in the party mood. “You can’t go wrong with red, white, and blue accessories; they’re festive and patriotic,” says consulting stylist Zoey Washington, who found the sampling shown here—and lots more like it—in stores and online.



Plunk these into a jar for a cheap and easy splash of color.

Shown: Stars and stripes straws, \$7 for a pack of 24, [acmepartybox.com](http://acmepartybox.com).



It’s unbreakable, reusable, and stylish!

Shown: Martha Stewart Collection striped acrylic wineglass, \$9, [macys.com](http://macys.com).



Hanging garlands over a table makes a party feel more festive.

Shown: Nautical garland, \$12, [westelm.com](http://westelm.com).



Bagging utensils makes them easier to grab at buffets.

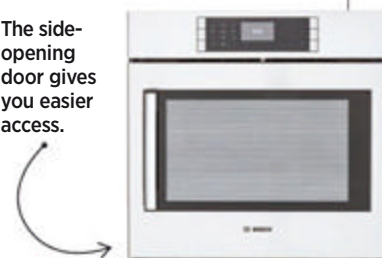
Shown: Seersucker red flatware-goodie pouch, \$3, [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com).

## lab update

## Hot new oven doors

Wall ovens don’t usually turn heads in our labs, but two new models got our attention. The GE Café Series CT907OSHSS, \$3,900, shown at bottom, has French doors, which are normally found in restaurant kitchens. And the Bosch HBLP451RUC, \$2,900, shown below, is the first wall oven we’ve tested with a side-swing door. Our experts say the new designs make it easier to load and unload food because you don’t have to reach over a hot oven door. The GE Café Series also impressed us with its great baking and broiling. The lower-scoring Bosch was better at broiling than baking.

The side-opening door gives you easier access.



French doors are great for narrow kitchens because they don’t swing out very far.



## SAFER CLEANERS

If you’re on the hunt for greener cleaners with safer ingredients, look for the Environmental Protection Agency’s new “Safer Choice” logo, shown at left. It’s on more than 1,000 products, including one of our top-rated all-purpose cleaners, Clorox Green Works. To earn the seal, cleaning products are screened by EPA scientists for potential health and environmental risks. For a list of cleaners with the seal, go to [epa.gov/saferchoice](http://epa.gov/saferchoice).





## Spice it up!

Make healthy dinners fast with our test kitchen's favorite rubs and marinades

There's nothing easier than whipping up a marinade or a dry rub to add flavor to meats, fish, poultry, and veggies. All you have to do is mix it up, slap it on your food, and light the grill—which means you can hang out at the pool all day and still get a great dinner on the table. And unlike many bottled barbecue sauces and marinades, homemade mixtures don't contain high fructose corn syrup, gums, and other additives you might want to avoid. Here are four quick, healthy, and delicious recipes developed by our test kitchen:

### Grilled salmon with sweet chili rub

Makes 6 servings ■ 190 calories, 9 grams fat, 170 milligrams sodium per serving

- 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ pounds salmon (preferably wild), cut into six 4-ounce pieces
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- Lemon or lime wedges for serving

1. Coat grill with oil or cooking spray and preheat to medium.
2. While grill is heating, mix sugar, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper to make the rub. Brush each salmon fillet with oil, then coat with rub mixture on top and sides of fish.
3. Grill salmon, skin side down, with lid closed, about 12 minutes or until done. Carefully remove salmon from grill with a metal spatula. Place on serving platter and sprinkle with cilantro. Serve with lemon or lime wedges.

**YUMMY MIX**  
Get big flavor without lots of calories with our spice rub.





### Grilled flank steak with coffee rub

Makes 6 servings ■ 190 calories, 9 grams fat, 390 milligrams sodium per serving

- 1 tablespoon finely ground espresso coffee
- 2 teaspoons dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper (or up to 1 teaspoon for more heat)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1½ pound flank steak

1. In a small bowl, mix together coffee, sugar, salt, paprika, and peppers until well-blended. In a separate bowl, mix the olive oil and garlic. Using a fork, mash the garlic cloves a little. Discard garlic.
2. Score steak on one side by making shallow cuts (about ¼-inch deep) in a diamond pattern with a paring knife. Brush meat all over with olive oil, then work in rub with your fingers until the entire steak is well-coated.
3. Let sit at room temperature for at least 1 hour or refrigerate for up to 24 hours. If steak is refrigerated, let it come to room temperature before grilling.
4. Heat grill to medium-high. Grill steak about 5 minutes on each side for medium-rare or until it reaches your desired doneness. Let rest 10 minutes before slicing against the grain to serve.

**SLICE IT RIGHT** For more tender bites, cut meat across the grain.



**ON THE MARKS**  
No grill? Use a grill pan to get a nice grill pattern.

### Grilled vegetables with Gorgonzola and walnuts

Makes 8 servings ■ 180 calories, 15 grams fat, 180 milligrams sodium per serving

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil plus 2 tablespoons           | 1 bunch green onions, roots cut off                             |
| ¼ teaspoon salt   | ¼ cup Gorgonzola, goat, or feta cheese, crumbled, about 1 ounce |
| ¼ teaspoon black pepper                                   | ¼ cup toasted walnuts, pine nuts, or pecans, chopped            |
| 1 red pepper, seeded and halved                           | 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar                                  |
| 1 yellow pepper, seeded and halved                        | 2 cloves garlic, minced   |
| 2 zucchini, sliced lengthwise into three pieces each      | 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard                                      |
| 2 yellow squash, sliced lengthwise into three pieces each | ½ cup chopped fresh basil, oregano, or chives                   |
| 1 eggplant, sliced into ½-inch rounds                     |   |

1. Preheat grill to medium heat.
2. Brush vegetables with ¼ cup olive oil, season with salt and pepper, then place directly on the grill. Cook 5 minutes, turn, and cook until tender, about 2 to 10 minutes depending on the vegetable.
3. Transfer vegetables to a platter; top with cheese and walnuts. Meanwhile, whisk the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil, vinegar, garlic, and mustard in a small bowl to blend. Drizzle over vegetables and top with basil.



## Grilled lemon-herb chicken breasts

Makes 6 servings ■ 170 calories, 8 grams fat, 330 milligrams sodium per serving

- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast halves**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon black pepper**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, from two lemons**
- 2 tablespoons chopped thyme, rosemary, or parsley (or any combination)**

- 1.** Season each chicken breast on both sides with salt and pepper.
- 2.** In a small bowl, combine the garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, and herbs. Brush mixture on both sides of each chicken piece. Cover and refrigerate 20 minutes or longer.
- 3.** Coat grill with oil or cooking spray and preheat to medium-high. Lower the temperature to medium heat and grill chicken 5 to 7 minutes per side, or until it reaches an internal temperature of 165° F on a meat thermometer.
- 4.** Transfer to a platter or plates. Serve with mango salsa, if desired.



**TOP IT OFF**  
Store-bought  
mango salsa  
is a quick and  
tasty topping.



# Hot new ‘health’ foods

What to put in your shopping cart—and what to skip

**Y**ou try to eat healthy, but healthy food fads seem to come and go as fast as fashion trends. It’s tough to keep up! A few years ago, heart-healthy oats and pomegranate juice were in vogue. More recently, everyone has been eating Greek

yogurt and kale, which are now ingredients in dozens of food products including candy, dips, and snacks. But a whole new crop of good-for-you-sounding foods are about to upstage them. We rounded up seven of them here. Ever drink matcha or munch on hemp seeds?

Our guide can help you figure out whether those and other hot health foods are worth putting in your shopping cart.

## ANCIENT GRAINS

The “ancient” reference just means that the grains have been harvested in the same way for centuries. They include amaranth, kamut, quinoa, spelt, and teff. Nutritionally, they’re just as protein- and fiber-rich as the generally cheaper old standbys—barley, bulgur, and oats. So ancient or not, eat your whole grains! People who consume more of them tend to live longer, according to a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

**What to buy or skip** Look for breads, cereals, and other foods that have whole grains listed high on their ingredients lists. And don’t just go by front-of-the-box claims. Some products in packaging that touts ancient grains might contain only a smattering added to a mostly refined-grain mix. Also make sure that products aren’t loaded with salt, sugar, and preservatives.

Shown: Arrowhead Mills Amaranth Flakes, 12 ounces, \$5.28, [iherb.com](http://iherb.com), and Nature’s Path Organic Kamut Puffs, 6 ounces, \$2.19, [naturespath.com](http://naturespath.com).

For a smart start, look for low-sugar cereals made with ancient grains, like these flakes and puffs.



Soak chia seeds in water, then use them as an egg substitute when baking.



### CHIA SEEDS

Like other seeds and nuts, chia seeds are high in fiber and can be a healthy addition to your diet. Try mixing them into salad dressings, smoothies, and yogurt. But don't pay attention to weight-loss claims. In a study of overweight adults on a chia-laced diet, there were no big losers.

**What to buy or skip** Look for bags of whole seeds. In packaged products, the seeds are generally too low on the ingredients list to make any difference in your diet.

Shown: Bob's Red Mill Whole Seed Chia, 16 ounces, \$13, [bobsredmill.com](http://bobsredmill.com).

Try black-bean spaghetti tossed with a chunky, fresh tomato sauce.



### BEAN PASTA

Chickpeas and beans are nutrition powerhouses. And bean pastas are even healthier than wheat-based pastas because noodles made from beans are packed with more protein and fiber. They're also gluten-free. But don't overdo it! A 3.5-ounce serving of chickpea-based pasta has 340 calories—more than double that of regular spaghetti (163 calories) or even a similar serving of plain beans.

**What to buy or skip** Pick pastas with beans listed first in ingredients lists.

Shown: Explore Asian Organic Black Bean Pasta, 7.05 ounces, \$4, [vitacost.com](http://vitacost.com).

Use hemp seeds in place of pricier pine nuts for a protein-rich pesto.



### HEMP SEEDS

These mild-tasting seeds are rich in alpha-linolenic acid, a plant-based source of heart-healthy omega-3s. And using the seeds in place of nuts in recipes is an easy way to boost protein. Don't worry—they won't give you the munchies. The seeds are free of THC, the chemical in hemp's cousin, marijuana.

**What to buy or skip** You're better off going for the whole seeds or equally healthy hemp milk than products that have seeds in them.

Shown: Hemp Hearts Raw Shelled Hemp Seeds, 8 ounces, \$9, [manitobaharvest.com](http://manitobaharvest.com).

For the real health deal, look for sauerkraut that has been 'traditionally' or 'naturally' fermented.



### FERMENTED FOODS

Like yogurt, those foods are packed with probiotics, the good bacteria that live in your gut. For example, consider kimchee, the Korean vegetable dish. Research suggests that the probiotic bacteria that keep kimchee and similar foods from spoiling also have health benefits, including improved immunity and good digestive health.

**What to buy or skip** Shop the refrigerator case, where you'll find fermented foods like yogurt and kefir as well as sauerkraut and pickles. (The shelf-stable versions aren't fermented, so you can skip those.) Also look for a label that says the food has "live" cultures, which need refrigeration to stay active. Fermented foods that are heat-treated or pasteurized lose the good bacteria along with the bad.

Shown: Bubbies Sauerkraut, \$6, [shoprite.com](http://shoprite.com).



## FOOD SHOPPING

### MATCHA GREEN TEA

This bright green ancient Japanese ceremonial tea is showing up as an ingredient in everything from energy bars to ice cream. It's also sold as a loose powder to mix with water. Matcha has more EGCG, an antioxidant that might protect against cancer and heart disease, than other green teas. It's also a good source of L-theanine, a compound that might help you feel more focused and alert.

**What to buy or skip** Choose the powder form and sip it in a cold or hot tea drink. Or slip it into a breakfast smoothie (try the one below). If your matcha comes from snack bars and ice cream, it might not be as nutritious because in packaged products it is mostly used just for color and flavor. Also, the sugars and fat in ready-to-eat products can cancel out health gains you get from a cup of matcha tea.

Shown: Maeda-en Shiki Matcha Green Tea Powder, 1 ounce, \$12.79, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Make a healthy smoothie by blending together a frozen banana, a cup of low-fat milk, a teaspoon of matcha, and a smidgen of honey.



This beef can cost twice as much as conventional meat, but it's worth the splurge.



### GRASS-FED BEEF

Beef raised completely on grass instead of grain is lower in calories and cholesterol-raising saturated fats. It also has more conjugated linoleic acid, a good fat that might have health benefits.

**What to buy or skip** Look for a certified grass-fed claim, such as a seal from the American Grassfed Association. The seal also certifies that the animals weren't treated with antibiotics or growth hormones. Grass-fed beef that's also organic (not all is) has an additional benefit. It ensures that the animals grazed on land that wasn't treated with synthetic fertilizers or herbicides.



IN SEASON

## 5 surprising things about ... Cucumbers

### THEY DON'T SAY 'COOL AS A CUCUMBER' FOR NOTHING.

The watery interior can be up to 20° F cooler than the outside air—even on a hot summer day.

### IT'S A FRUIT.

Cucumbers are in the same family as watermelon and pumpkin.

### EACH PLANT HAS MALE AND FEMALE FLOWERS.

They're both yellow, but only the female blossoms produce the cukes. Try the flowers breaded and fried as fritters or chopped into salads.

### THAT SHINY, WAXY COATING KEEPS CUKES FRESH LONGER.

The coating seals in moisture. If you're concerned about what's in it, buy organic cucumbers.

### There are two main types.

'Slicing' cucumbers are the regular supermarket variety. 'Pickling' cukes are stouter, with spinier skins. Some slicing cucumbers (shown) are also 'burpless.' They have fewer seeds and less cucurbitacin, a compound that can make you burp.

### NUTRITION LOWDOWN

½ cup raw cucumber with peel =

- 8 calories
- 0 grams fat
- 76 milligrams potassium
- 1.5 milligrams vitamin C

# Price it out

Unit pricing can help you save big—if you avoid these snafus

Unit prices are supposed to help you compare applesauce to applesauce or ketchup to ketchup, so that you can quickly find the best deal. But those little numbers on the shelf tag showing the price per ounce, pound, quart, or other measure can be tricky. That's because they're sometimes inconsistent. So you might be comparing, say, a price per ounce vs. a price per quart. Not helpful!

The problem is that there are no federal rules about unit pricing. Although the National Institute of Standards and Technology, an agency in the Department of Commerce, has issued recommendations to standardize the labels, not all states follow them. So until a law is passed to unify labels, you're on your own. Here's how to avoid seven costly mistakes:

## **MISTAKE NO. 1 Ignoring unit pricing on products.**

OK, they're not perfect. And many folks don't use them. In a 2014 survey by the Food Marketing Institute, 22 percent of respondents said they didn't regularly check unit prices. But other research has found that shoppers can save more than 50 percent by choosing the most economical size.

**Shop smarter tip** Always look at the unit price if there is one, no matter what you're buying.

It might sometimes be confusing, but not looking at all could mean missing out on the best deals. **Tip:** Make a note of the unit prices for your shopping-list staples. That way, you'll be able to spot a good sale when you see it. "It's especially important to know the prices for the more expensive things you eat, like nuts, when the savings can be significant during a sale," Steve Economides says. He and his wife, Annette, wrote "Cut Your Grocery Bill in Half" (HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2010) and own the website [moneysmartfamily.com](http://moneysmartfamily.com).

## **MISTAKE NO. 2 Thinking that you can always compare unit prices.**

Even within the same food category, the units used for pricing can be all over the map. They might be shown in ounces and pounds or grams and kilos.

When shopping in our local New York metro markets, we found two 24-ounce bottles of Ken's Steak House salad dressing side by side on a shelf; one was priced per quart, the other by pint. We also found Heinz vinegar priced per quart and Goya vinegar by the ounce.

**Shop smarter tip** Do the math, but you don't have to do it in your head. There are free apps that can do quick calculations for you, such as Unit Price Compare for Android phones and Apples2Oranges for iPhones.

## **MISTAKE NO. 3 Not weighing all of your options.**

We mean that literally! When produce like cantaloupes or cucumbers are sold per item, not per pound, it pays to choose the largest one. The same goes for rotisserie chicken. Our local store has the weight on the label but charges the same price for



all of the birds. Economides says he sees weight variations with fixed-price packaged produce, too. “By law, bagged or boxed produce must contain at minimum the weight on the label,” he says. But because of evaporation, manufacturers overfill packages, so that a 1-pound bag of carrots might weigh as much as a quarter-pound over.

**Shop smarter tip** Use the scale. We found honeydew melons weighing 3.60 pounds to 5.49 pounds. At \$3.99 per melon, that breaks down to 73 cents per pound for the largest one and \$1.11 per pound for the smallest. We also grabbed two 1-pound containers of tomatoes and found that one weighed 1.02 pounds and the other 1.14 pounds, almost 2 more ounces for our \$2.99.

**MISTAKE NO. 4 Assuming that the sale item is the best deal.**

Ounce for ounce or pound for pound, the best deal might be a product that’s not on sale, especially if it’s

a store brand. So don’t let sale signs and coupons steer you to a bum deal!

**Shop smarter tip** Get out your smartphone. “Sale items may only reflect the price of the product and not include the unit price,” Economides says. So the calculator on your phone or those unit-price apps will help you figure out the best deal. For example, we found Barilla pasta on sale at three for \$5, or \$1.67 per pound, but regularly priced Don Pepe pasta rang up at just \$1.29 per pound.

**MISTAKE NO. 5 Thinking that the big size is always cheaper.**

That larger package usually saves you money, but not always. Take the 32-ounce carton of Swanson chicken broth we found with a unit price of \$2.99 per quart, 27 cents per quart more than the 14-ounce size. And the \$2.79 per pound unit price for a 12-ounce can of Hunt’s tomato paste was a whopping \$1.79 cents per pound more expensive than

the 8-ounce one on sale.

**Shop smarter tip** Don’t grab the biggest size automatically; always check unit prices to find out which size is the best deal.

**MISTAKE NO. 6 Assuming similar package sizes are the same.**

Make sure you’re getting the same quantity for the money. For example, we found that Ken’s Steak House’s small salad-dressing bottles contain 9 ounces; Wish-Bone’s and Kraft’s have 8 ounces. Birds Eye’s frozen, bagged peas and broccoli florets weighed 14.4 ounces, yet its cut corn and mixed veggies, in what seemed to be identical bags, were 16 ounces each for the same price per bag.

**Shop smarter tip** Look closely to make sure the quantities of the items you’re comparing are identical. Even the same company might use different packaging in the same line.

**MISTAKE NO. 7 Not paying attention at the register.**

A wrongly entered produce code or sale price can easily undo some of the savings you earned by carefully paying attention to unit pricing, Economides says. He estimates that he finds an overcharge in one of every five shopping trips.

**Shop smarter tip** If you can’t follow the screen as you’re loading items at checkout, look at your receipt before leaving the store. “If we find a mistake, we’ve found that store managers are inclined to just give us cash for the difference,” Economides says. And if you’re not a whiz at remembering the prices of every item you’re buying, jot them down on your list as you shop.



*For more price-comparison shopping tricks, see our beauty-products price scan starting on page 57.*



# Food news

## New sweeteners in your food

About a quarter of shoppers say they avoid foods with added sugars—mostly because of health concerns, according to a recent Nielsen survey. So food makers are introducing new sweeteners that they claim are better for you but taste like regular sugar. Here's the lowdown on four products now approved by the Food and Drug Administration. (Calorie counts are per teaspoon.)

### ADVANTAME (0 calories)

**What it is** It's 100 times sweeter than its chemical cousin, aspartame—or 20,000 times sweeter than sugar—so a tiny bit goes a long way.

**Where to find it** It has been approved for use in packaged desserts, drinks, candy, and jelly.

### ALLULOSE (1.6 calories)

**What it is** Sold under the brand name Dolcia Prima, it's made from corn

carbohydrates that are treated with enzymes. According to its producer, allulose is 70 percent as sweet as sugar but has just 10 percent of the calories because unlike sugar it can't be metabolized by the body.

**Where to find it** Packaged desserts, yogurt, and candies.

### COCONUT SUGAR (16 calories)

**What it is** Made from the nectar of flowers of the coconut tree, it has the same amount of calories as sugar. Proponents claim it has a lower glycemic index (a measure of how much an ingredient raises blood sugar) than table sugar and offers minerals such as potassium, but the American Diabetes Association says it shouldn't be treated differently from other sugars.

**Where to find it** It's sold as an organic sweetener by brands such as Nutiva and Bob's Red Mill.



### MONK FRUIT EXTRACT (0 calories)

**What it is** Eaten in China for centuries, it's 100 to 250 times sweeter than sugar. It's FDA-approved, but the Center for Science in the Public Interest says to use caution because of poor testing.

**Where to find it** You can buy Monk Fruit in the Raw. It's also in Dole Diced Peaches with No Sugar Added, Chobani Simply 100 Yogurt, Zevia soda (shown above), and the Skinny Cow drink below.

should  
you eat  
that?!



## SKINNY COW MOCHA LATTE ICED COFFEE DRINK, \$1.99

**WHAT'S IN IT** The label claims "no artificial colors, flavors, or sweeteners and 100% delicious." Though the first five ingredients are familiar staples—reduced-fat milk, water, sugar, coffee, and cocoa—it also contains four gums and thickeners; dipotassium phosphate, an additive used to prevent coagulation; and the sweetener monk fruit extract (see above). An 8-ounce serving has 120 calories—about 20 from fat and almost all of the rest from sugars. It also has 160 milligrams of sodium—about 60 percent more than similar drinks we've tested.

**SHOPSMART SAYS** There are skinnier and yummier coffee drinks, say our taste testers, who didn't like the slick texture of this beverage. For more yum and 10 fewer calories try Illy Issimo Mochaccino.

## Overstock veggie deals

It's a great site for deals on everything from cookware to clothing, but veggies? Yessiree! Overstock has partnered with local farms across the country to launch its own farmers market with local delivery in 23 states plus Washington, D.C. If you're not in ZIP-code range for those deliveries, there are nonlocal sustainable farm offerings, including grass-fed beef and bulk fruit boxes.





## Safer in the sun

See which sunscreens aced our tests and which ones came up short—sometimes real short

**D**o you go for 15 or 50? Odds are you pick sunscreens by the number. But our new tests found that you can't always trust the SPF claims on labels. Many of the products we tested didn't live up to their numbers. In one case, an SPF 60 product came in at a mere 18. Talk about getting burned! The only way to make sure you're getting the right protection is to turn the page for our Smart Picks.

Another way to protect yourself is to buy sunscreen that you'll actually want to use. You've probably skipped the sticky goo from time to time. But you don't have to sacrifice protection for comfort. In our tests of 40 body and face sunscreens, we found plenty that rub in quickly, don't smell bad, and do a great job of defending your skin against the ultraviolet rays (UVA and UVB) that can cause burning, sagging, wrinkling, and skin cancer. (We test sunscreens on plates as well as people. Testers measure how many UVA and UVB rays are absorbed, and we have sensory experts assess things like smell and skin feel.)

Even better, while two of our top-rated sunscreens are among the most expensive, costing as much as \$7 per ounce, some of our Smart Picks are bargain-priced store brands that cost less than a dollar an ounce.

Also turn to page 50 to see what our testers found out about facial sunscreens, including mineral formulas, and sun-blocking clothing.



**MAIN SQUEEZE**  
La Roche-Posay got the highest score in our tests, but it's also the priciest.



# Best sunscreens

34 TESTED  14 SMART PICKS



## LA ROCHE-POSAY ANTHELIOS 60 MELT-IN SUNSCREEN MILK

**Price** \$36 (5 ounces)

**Why we like it** This thin lotion provides ultrahigh protection and really does melt into your skin, leaving almost no residue. One downside: At more than \$7 per ounce, it's the priciest product we tested.

**Scent** The label says it's fragrance-free, but that doesn't mean it's odorless. Our testers noted a slight plastic-y smell.

## VICHY CAPITAL SOLEIL LIGHT WEIGHT FOAMING LOTION SPF 50

**Price** \$28.50 (4.8 ounces)

**Why we like it** The unusual mousselike texture (think shaving cream) practically sinks into your skin. Like sprays, this one uses propellants, so it's flammable. Let it dry thoroughly before you go near a grill or any other flame.

**Scent** Slight citrus and floral aroma.

## BANANA BOAT SUN COMFORT CONTINUOUS SPRAY SPF 50+

**Price** \$11 (6 ounces)

**Why we like it** The narrow spray pattern makes it easy to target specific areas of the body. Just don't spray this or any other product on your face; you don't want to inhale it. Instead, spray your hands and rub them on your face.

**Scent** Sort of like a piña colada, with a hint of coconut and other tropical fruits.

## EQUATE (WALMART) ULTRA PROTECTION SPF 50

**Price** \$9 (16 ounces)

**Why we like it** This store brand is the lowest-priced lotion of the bunch, so it's a very smart buy, especially if you go through a lot of sunscreen. But our testers did note that it leaves some residue on the skin even after it dries.

**Scent** Classic beachy.





great for grownups, too!

## ✗ NOT SO HOT

- ALOE GATOR SPF 40+, \$13 (4 OUNCES)
- CVS BABY PURE & GENTLE SPF 60, \$10 (3 OUNCES)
- GODDESS GARDEN ORGANICS SUNNY BODY NATURAL SPF 30, \$22 (6 OUNCES)
- ELTA MD UV AERO SPF 45, \$28 (6 OUNCES)
- VANICREAM SPF 50+, \$18 (4 OUNCES)
- YES TO CUCUMBERS NATURAL SPF 30, \$12 (3 OUNCES)

In our tests, those sunscreens were the worst of the bunch for either UVA or UVB protection. Some of them also failed to meet their claimed SPF; turn the page for more details.

### COPPERTONE WATER BABIES SPF 50

**Price** \$10.50 (8 ounces)

**Why we like it** This classic Coppertone product was also a top pick last year, and it's not just for babies! Adults and kids can use it, too.

**Scent** Slight baby powder and rose.

### NEUTROGENA BEACH DEFENSE WATER + SUN PROTECTION SPF 70

**Price** \$10.50 (6.5 ounces)

**Why we like it** The narrow spray pattern of this high-SPF sunscreen means that it's less likely to disperse into the air, especially on windy days. But it did leave a slight residue on skin.

**Scent** Candylike fruity aroma.

### UP & UP (TARGET) ULTRA-SHEER SPF 30

**Price** \$4.90 (3 ounces)

**Why we like it** Target's lotion has "ultra-sheer" in the name, but it's not quite. Our testers noted that it left a slight residue on skin.

**Scent** A hint of baby powder, with slight plastic notes, sort of like a beach ball, but not unpleasant.

## other Smart Picks

- L'Oréal Quick Dry Sheer Finish SPF 50+, \$11 (4.5 ounces)
- No-Ad Sport SPF 50, \$10 (16 ounces)
- Ocean Potion Protect & Nourish SPF 30, \$8 (8 ounces)
- Aveeno Protect + Hydrate SPF 30, \$10 (3 ounces)
- Caribbean Breeze Continuous Tropical Mist SPF 70, \$16.50 (6 ounces)
- Coppertone Sport High Performance AccuSpray SPF 30, \$9.50 (6 ounces)
- Equate (Walmart) Sport Continuous Spray SPF 30, \$8 (6 ounces)

## Busted! 11 that fell short

These products had claims of a higher SPF than they delivered in our tests. Some still give you plenty of protection, meaning that they have an SPF of at least 30; they're noted below with an asterisk. The others don't give you enough coverage to stay safe in the sun.

Sunscreen	Claimed SPF	Tested SPF
Coppertone Ultraguard SPF 70+	70+	59*
Coppertone Clearly Sheer for Beach & Pool SPF 50+	50+	37*
Banana Boat Sport Performance Clear UltraMist with Powerstay Technology SPF 100	100	36*
Hawaiian Tropic Sheer Touch Ultra Radiance SPF 50	50	28
Babyganics Mineral-Based SPF 50+	50+	25
Well at Walgreens Baby SPF 50	50	25
Banana Boat Sport Performance Clear UltraMist with Powerstay Technology SPF 50+	50+	24
EltaMD UV Aero SPF 45	45	22
CVS Baby Pure & Gentle SPF 60	60	18
Vanicream SPF 50+	50+	17
Yes to Cucumbers Natural SPF 30	30	14

## Best facial sunscreens

6 TESTED  2 SMART PICKS

**AVON SUN + FACE LOTION**  
SPF 40 \$9 (3 ounces)

**COPPERTONE SPORT HIGH PERFORMANCE FACES**  
SPF 50 \$10 (4 ounces)



Body and facial sunscreens often contain the same active ingredients and can be used interchangeably. But face products are usually packaged differently and can come with a higher price. Our experts say they're usually worth it, though. For one thing, they're often formulated with no fragrance or just a hint. And they might not contain oils, so they feel lighter on your face. "This allows them to be used under makeup without feeling heavy or greasy," explains Patricia Agin, Ph.D., of the Coppertone Solar Research Center.

Both of our top facial sunscreens provide plenty of broad-spectrum coverage, though the Coppertone product tested at an SPF of 41 rather than the 50 claimed on the container. They left just a slight amount of residue and were slightly scented.

We included mineral sunscreens for your face in our tests. But as we found with body sunscreens, facial products [with only the mineral active ingredients zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide] didn't hold up well.

If you don't want to pay a premium for a separate facial sunscreen but want a lightweight one, avoid those with ultrahigh SPF. Some have higher levels of active ingredients, so they can feel heavier. And if you use a moisturizer with SPF, you should still reapply it later on, just as you should with any sunscreen.



## Does sun-blocking clothing work?

Can a shirt embedded with sunscreen shield you from the sun better than a regular shirt? To find out, we tested Coolibar Girl's Rash Guard, \$32 (shown) with a claimed UPF of 50+ (ultraviolet protection factor, basically the clothing version of SPF) and an Eastbay Evapor long-sleeved compression crew, \$18. Both were made of 84 percent polyester and 16 percent spandex. And both provided a lot more UPF than 50—but so did a plain white Hanes Beefy-T. Bottom line: Save your money, but cover up if you're going to spend time in the sun.

This shirt is embedded with titanium dioxide, a sunscreen ingredient.



# Don't get burned

How difficult can it be to put on sunscreen (except for covering your own back)? More difficult than you might think. Avoid these common mistakes to stay safe in the sun:

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Applying it outdoors.

**EASY FIX** Rub it in 15 to 30 minutes or more before going outside, so that it has time to be fully absorbed into your skin. To limit staining, allow it to dry before putting on your clothing or swimsuit. Almost all of the products we tested stained fabric.

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Skimping.

**EASY FIX** To get the promised SPF, you need to apply sunscreen liberally. Use a dollop of lotion the size of a golf ball for your entire body. If you aren't baring that much skin, use a teaspoon per body part. Prefer a spray? Cover yourself twice and rub it in to make sure you didn't miss a spot.

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Lubing up just once.

**EASY FIX** Forty percent of people in a survey we conducted last year said they never reapply sunscreen when they're in the sun for much of the day. That's a mistake. For full protection, reapply it every 2 hours (or after you get wet), no matter what SPF you use.

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Going without it on cold, cloudy, or nonbeach days.

**EASY FIX** If you're outside, you should be wearing sunscreen. After all, incidental UV exposure (like when you're walking your dog) accounts for as much as 80 percent



**AVOID THE OUCH**  
Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours!

of your lifetime exposure. And that accumulation is linked to skin cancer and aging. UV radiation is invisible, so it doesn't need to be warm or sunny to cause real damage. In fact, up to 80 percent of UV rays penetrate through clouds.

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Thinking that sunscreen is all you need.

**EASY FIX** Sunscreen should be "used as part of a complete sun-protection regimen that also includes sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and clothing. Also try to stay out of the

sun during the peak hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when you're most likely to get burned.

## SUNSCREEN SLIPUP

### Assuming that you can hang out in the sun all day.

**EASY FIX** Exceeding a sunscreen's maximum protection time—it depends on your sun exposure and skin type—can lead to burning. So if you normally burn after 10 minutes without any protection and have been using an SPF 30 sunscreen for 5 hours, your best choice isn't to reapply it but to cover up or seek some shade.



To cover your whole body, use about 2 tablespoons of lotion.



# Swat team

Keep bugs from biting without dousing yourself in chemicals

**A**s if bug bites aren't annoying enough, they can also make you sick. We have West Nile and Lyme to worry about, and now a mosquito-borne virus called chikungunya, which can cause crippling arthritis. Lots of products claim to protect you from mosquitoes and ticks, but many of them contain worrisome levels of chemicals you don't necessarily want to spray on yourself or your kids.

In our survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults, only about a third said they believe the products on store shelves are safe to use, and only around a third said they use the stuff. But here's good news: In our tests, insect repellents made with milder chemicals worked the best. (We actually

use people in our tests—with disease-free bugs, of course!) Those outperformed products with up to 25 percent DEET, a chemical that did well in our past tests but can cause rashes and seizures.

This year's top bug sprays, listed below in ratings order, contain picaridin (20 percent) or oil of lemon eucalyptus (30 percent), which don't have the scary side effects of DEET. But picaridin can cause eye, skin, or lung irritation, and oil of lemon eucalyptus can irritate your eyes. Also, most repellents can damage leather and vinyl and remove nail polish. So use them only when you really need them, and only spray enough to cover clothing and exposed skin, but never spray them near cuts or on legs right after shaving.

## Best insect repellents | 15 TESTED ✓ 5 SMART PICKS



### SAWYER FISHERMAN'S FORMULA PICARIDIN

**Price** \$8.25 (4 ounces)  
**Mosquito control** 8 hours  
**Tick control** 8 hours  
**Testers' notes** This pump spray contains picaridin, a compound similar to one found in black pepper. Our sensory pros say it smells sort of like corn chips, and it left behind a slightly oily feel.



### REPEL LEMON EUCALYPTUS

**Price** \$7 (4 ounces)  
**Mosquito control** 7 hours  
**Tick control** 7 hours  
**Testers' notes** It contains a chemically synthesized oil of lemon eucalyptus, which can sting eyes. The Food and Drug Administration says not to use it on kids under 3. It was slightly oily and didn't stain fabrics but did remove polish.



**bargain  
buy**

### REPEL SCENTED FAMILY

**Price** \$7.50 (6.5 ounces)  
**Mosquito control** 5 hours  
**Tick control** 8 hours  
**Testers' notes** This aerosol contains 15 percent DEET. (For safety and effectiveness, it's best to keep DEET less than 30 percent but more than 7 percent.) It left a thin, dry coating on skin and had a chemical smell with a hint of lemon.



### NATRAPEL 8 HOUR

**Price** \$8 (6 ounces)  
**Mosquito control** 8 hours  
**Tick control** 6 hours  
**Testers' notes** This picaridin-based spray had a floral perfume-like aroma and left behind an oily residue.



## WATCH FOR THIS NEW SEAL

The “Avoid Bites” label from the Environmental Protection Agency will be on insect repellents as soon as next summer. It tells you how long a product will repel mosquitoes and ticks. The seal is voluntary for qualifying companies—but only manufacturers that pass the EPA’s scientific review process will be allowed to use it on their products.



### OFF DEEP WOODS VIII

**Price** \$7 (4 ounces)

**Mosquito control** 8 hours

**Tick control** 5 hours

**Testers’ notes** This product’s active ingredient is 25 percent deet. It has a mild fruity, floral aroma and left a thin, dry coating on skin. In addition to harming leather, vinyl, and nail polish, it also stained polyester.

## Why natural mosquito sprays aren’t worth it

The labels are appealing, with pretty pictures of flowers, plants, and sunshine. And as they say, they really are deet-free and made from plant oils, such as citronella, geraniol, lemongrass, and rosemary. The problem is that you can’t count on label claims like “repels mosquitoes for hours.”

Unlike repellents made with chemically synthesized plantlike ingredients (including picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus, found in some of our Smart Picks), plant-oil products are exempt from scrutiny by the Environmental Protection Agency. We tested six of them (all are shown below), including products from Burt’s Bees, California Baby, and Cutter. The results: None of the natural products worked for more than an hour to keep away the most aggressive mosquitoes. Some failed almost immediately. Most did better with tick protection, lasting for more than 6 hours—except for one, EcoSmart Organic, which kept ticks away for only about an hour.

Also, the products that contain the word “organic” in their names do not contain certified organic ingredients or have the Department of Agriculture organic seal.



**GREEN BUT NOT GREAT** Plant-based oil repellents aren’t regulated by the EPA.

## ✗ NOT SO HOT

These sprays kept away deer ticks (for about 5 to 6 hours) but not mosquitoes (for the most aggressive bugs, it was just an hour or less):

- **CUTTER SKINSATIONS** (7 PERCENT DEET), \$4.50
- **BULLFROG MOSQUITO COAST** (20 PERCENT IIR3535), \$8
- **OFF FAMILY CARE II CLEAN FEEL** (5 PERCENT PICARIDIN), \$6



## NO-SPRAY BUG CHASERS

If you're not a fan of sprays no matter what's in them, you might be tempted to try some alternative products such as candles or wristbands. But the ones we tried are all a waste of money. To put candles to the test, we simulated a backyard picnic in a 25x30-foot room and unleashed 250 mosquitoes—they were the aedes variety, which are aggressive biters and can carry chikungunya. Then we suited up four testers in protective gear and sat them at a "picnic" table. Next, we counted how often mosquitoes landed on them. To check the wristbands, testers stuck their arms into cages full of mosquitoes. What worked better than those specialty products: a plain old fan—it literally blows bugs away.

Cranked up to its highest speed, our 16-inch oscillating fan reduced the number of invaders by 45 to 65 percent.



Stop scratching! Ice packs and drugstore creams can help.



## Once bitten

Don't be shy! See a doctor if you develop symptoms. Here's advice from our medical experts:

### MOSQUITOES

**How to ease the itch** Try an ice pack and an over-the-counter steroid cream, such as hydrocortisone (Cortizone-10 and generic). Or try calamine lotion or a dab or two of white vinegar.

**When to see a doctor** West Nile and chikungunya are viral, so antibiotics won't help, but you should see a doc if you develop a fever, body aches, headache, or joint pain. You can take a pain reliever such as Advil to ease your symptoms.

### TICKS

**If you find one on you** Use tweezers to remove the tick, making sure you get the entire body and head.

**When to see a doctor** Deer ticks usually have to be attached for at least 36 hours to transmit Lyme disease. But if you develop a bull's-eye rash or chills, fever, fatigue, headaches, and muscle or joint pain, call your doc. Getting treatment early can stop tick-borne infections and prevent any complications.

## ✗ NOT SO HOT

■ **OFF CITRONELLA BUCKET, \$8.50**

■ **BUG BAND PORTABLE DIFFUSER, \$20**

Neither the Off bucket, which contains 0.5 percent oil of citronella, nor the diffuser, which contains 20 percent geraniol, kept the mosquitoes away.

■ **COLEMAN NATURALS INSECT REPELLENT SNAP BAND, \$4**

■ **SUPER BAND WRISTBAND, \$1**  
These wristbands contain citronella oil (Coleman) and geraniol oil (Super Band). But they're useless; the bugs started biting our testers immediately.





THIS JUST IN

# Health news

## SAVE YOUR BRAIN

To keep your mind sharp as you age, you might want to become a regular at your local craft-supplies store. A recent Mayo Clinic study showed that seniors who kept up with their arts-and-crafts pastimes were 73 percent less likely to develop thinking and memory problems that can lead to dementia.

“Engagement in these activities maintains or strengthens the function of brain cells,” says lead researcher Rosebud Roberts. So does the socializing that often goes along with those activities, she adds.

For the study, researchers tracked the activities of 256 people, with an average age of 87, for about four years. Keeping up with artsy hobbies they had enjoyed in midlife—including drawing, sculpting, woodworking, pottery, ceramics, quilting, and sewing—lowered the risk of fuzzy thinking and memory gaps; so did getting together with friends and family.

And the benefits of those hobbies don’t stop there. Other research reveals that people who do crafts report lower

levels of stress. Also, knitters with chronic pain may feel less discomfort while working with needles and yarn. And in a 2014 University of Central Florida study, older women who did crafts had stronger spatial-ability skills (the ability to think in three dimensions) than noncrafters. So go ahead and stock up on some paint or yarn!



These needles can help keep you on the ball.

## Don’t pucker up for your pooch!

Got a new puppy? Skip the kisses; they might leave you—or Fido—with a nasty virus. New research from the U.K. shows that we might be able to share a bug called norovirus with our dogs. Norovirus is super-contagious and causes gastroenteritis, aka “stomach flu.” Health experts estimate that it’s responsible for up to 21 million cases of diarrhea, vomiting, and tummy pain in the U.S. each year.

In the study, researchers analyzed blood samples from 325 dogs and found signs that we and our canine companions might share immune responses to the virus. Also, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that a few people who came into contact with a sick puppy developed pneumonia.

To stay safe, be extra careful when cleaning up after your dog. Ideally, use a long-handled scooper as well as a plastic mitt. And skip the kisses, especially if you or your dog isn’t feeling well.

## Use your phone for sun safety

In a recent National Cancer Institute-funded study, users of an app that delivers sun-safety reminders were more likely than nonusers to take protective steps such as covering up or catching some shade. The SunZapp app factors in your skin type, what you’re wearing, when you applied sunscreen, and other factors, as well as the strength of the sun’s rays, then prompts you when it’s time to reapply or take cover. The study was done by the app developer and researchers at the University of Colorado and the University of New Mexico. Also get the SunWise app from the Environmental Protection Agency for the daily and hourly UV index, and tips for staying safe. Both apps are free for Android and Apple devices.

**SICK LIKE A DOG**  
Kissing your puppy might make you ill!





ShopSmart  
Magazine

Like Follow Message

Timeline About Photos Videos More

#### APPS

Poll Poll

#### PHOTOS



Post Photo / Video

Write something on this Page...



ShopSmart shared a link.

Shopping this weekend? These 6 sites will save you time and money!  
<http://bit.ly/1to9Jfc>



6 great sites all bargain lovers should know  
[www.shopsmart.org](http://www.shopsmart.org)

We're always on the hunt for great money-saving sites and apps, as ShopSmart readers know. And if there's one thing we love more than finding new digital bargain-hunting tools, it's revisiting some of our...

Like · Comment · Share

57 Shares

76 people like this.



Maricel thanks

October 6 at 10:26am · Like

#### VIDEOS



#### LIKED BY THIS PAGE



Food Memories and Cook...

Like

The best time to save money on everything!  
[www.shopsmart.org](http://www.shopsmart.org)

When is the best time to buy? ShopSmart's product research experts, who monitor prices, have found that deep discounts for some things are as regular as the seasons. Use our month-by-month shopping calendar to see when you can usually find the...



## Size it up

Comparison shopping for beauty products is tough. We did the math to help you save.

When you buy groceries like milk or eggs, it's pretty easy to compare prices. That's because milk usually comes in gallons and quarts, and eggs are often sold by the dozen. Beauty products are another story. Package sizes are all over the map, and you can't rely on unit prices. Why should you care? Because that drugstore moisturizer or cleanser that seems like a decent deal might actually be far more expensive than you think. You might even find that, ounce for ounce, a department-store product costs about the same.

The only way to tell what you're really paying is to calculate product prices by the ounce (or another equal measure), so that you can compare apples to apples. Working with our statisticians, we priced out 65 skin-care products, including cleansers, eye creams, facial moisturizers, and serums. All were among the best sellers at major retailers, and they included such popular brands as Aveeno, Clarins, Dior, La Mer, Neutrogena, and Olay.

The results surprised us. Turn the page to see the products that had the biggest price differences, the ones that were the most difficult to compare by price, and the ones with prices that were similar at drugstores and department stores.

### LESS IS MORE

When it comes to beauty products, the smaller the bottle, the higher the price.



## DRUGSTORES ARE 82% CHEAPER

PRODUCT CATEGORY	DEPARTMENT-STORE AVERAGE	DRUGSTORE AVERAGE	SAVINGS
All	\$82.61	\$14.81	82%
Moisturizers	\$21.49	\$8.50	60%
Eye creams	\$124.97	\$35.44	72%
Cleansers	\$6.07	\$1.60	74%
Serums	\$172.45	\$17	93%

Ounce for ounce, department-store products cost, on average, almost six times more than drugstore products. (The prices at left are per ounce.) The biggest price gap was in serums, so if you're shopping for one for the first time, you might want to start by trying drugstore brands.

## Premium products don't always cost a premium

Cleansers were the least expensive product we looked at, overall. And as you can see below, ounce for ounce, some department-store products actually cost about the same as a common drugstore brand. The most expensive cleanser we checked, Dr. Hauschka Cleansing Cream, was less than half the size of most other cleansers and cost about four times the price of those below.

For about the same price, you could buy this drugstore product ...



**KISS MY FACE POTENT & PURE  
CLEAN FOR A DAY CREAMY  
FACE CLEANSER, \$15**  
(4 ounces)

... or treat yourself at a department-store beauty counter.



**ORIGINS CLEAN ENERGY  
GENTLE CLEANSING OIL, \$26**  
(6.7 ounces)



**FIRST AID BEAUTY FACE  
CLEANSER, \$20**  
(5 ounces)



**CLARISONIC REFRESHING GEL  
CLEANSER, \$25**  
(6 ounces)



## Moisturizer sizes vary the most, so it pays to comparison shop with a calculator

We found an average package size of 1.8 ounces at department stores and just 4.5 ounces at drugstores. And the biggest were the cheapest. The most expensive was 60 times the price of the cheapest, and you get one-ninth the amount per jar!



## Eye creams are the easiest to compare

All but one of the eye creams we shopped for came in 0.5-ounce containers. The one outlier—the drugstore brand InstaNatural Youth Express Eye Gel, which came in a 1.7-ounce package—was also the cheapest, at \$11.75 per ounce. The most expensive product, Obagi Elastiderm Eye Cream, was more than 18 times the price.

## Serums cost the most per ounce

The priciest item in our scan was a serum, RéVive Intensité Volumizing Serum, at \$600 per ounce. That's 99 percent more than the cheapest one we priced, Nivea Skin Firming & Smoothing Concentrated Serum, at \$6.40 per ounce.

## HIGH-END AND MASS-MARKET BRANDS MAY BE SIMILAR



**\$204 PER OUNCE**  
**LANCÔME ABSOLUTE PREMIUM BX ABSOLUTE REPLENISHING EYE CREAM**



**\$35.98 PER OUNCE**  
**L'ORÉAL PARIS REVITALIFT COMPLETE ANTI-WRINKLE & FIRMING MOISTURIZER EYE CREAM**

In the eye-cream category, Lancôme had the second-priciest product in our scan. But its sister brand L'Oréal, which is owned by the same parent company, fell in the middle of the drugstore pack. Another sibling rivalry: Clinique All About Eyes Rich (\$62 per ounce) cost 50 percent less than a product from its sister brand Estée Lauder, Resilience Lift Firming/Sculpting Eye Creme (\$124 per ounce). It pays to compare the prices of sister brands because they might contain similar formulas. If the first five ingredients of any products in a category are the same, the products are likely to be similar.



Despite big swings in what you'll spend, serums are easy to compare because most come in a 1-ounce package.

# Flip-flop shape

What to buy to get your tootsies ready for summer



It's sandal season—are your feet ready for the big reveal? We asked podiatrists and dermatologists for their advice, including a list of products that can give you salonlike results at home. They also told us about a few products you should stay away from (see page 62).

## Moisturize like crazy

**What to buy** Look for creams containing petrolatum, an emollient that smoothes flaky skin, or a moisture-retaining ingredient such as lactic acid. One lactic acid-based cream that experts recommend is AmLactin Triple Action Alpha-Hydroxy Therapy Foot Cream, \$8, shown below.

**Expert tip** To lock in moisture, slather your feet with the cream right after a bath or shower, when skin is still damp, says New York City dermatologist Doris Day, M.D. Need an extra boost in hydration? Wear socks to bed to help the moisturizer seep in and leave feet baby soft.



**BEACHY FEET**  
Slather up with a lactic acid-based cream to smooth those dry patches.





## Give your toenails a proper trim

**What to buy** Toenail clippers, such as the Seki Edge Deluxe Toenail Clipper, \$11, shown. (We love the handy clippings catcher.) One of the biggest mistakes people make is using clippers designed for fingernails on toes. Toenail clippers are designed to handle thicker nails, so they're easier to use.

**Expert tip** "Keep toenails a little longer and do a straight-across square cut," advises Emily Splichal, DPM, a podiatrist in New York. "Any cutting of the corners should be done with clean clippers to avoid introducing bacteria under the nail. If you get an irritation or an ingrown nail, soak the foot in epsom salt and don't dig the nail out," she says.

## Smooth away calluses

**What to buy** A pumice brush (shown: EcoTools Bamboo Foot Brush & Pumice, \$3.19). The skin pros interviewed for this article prefer this gentler form of exfoliation over foot razors and scrapers for calluses.

**Expert tip** Also use a pumice brush twice per week, after soaking feet in lukewarm water, Day says. "If not smoothed, calluses can cause painful cracks in the skin that can bleed and increase your risk of infection." To prevent calluses in the first place, avoid going stocking-free in shoes that irritate your skin.

**BRUSH IT OFF** Skip the razors and scrapers.



## Soak weekly

**WHAT TO BUY** Epsom salt (shown: Dr. Teal's Pure Epsom Salt Foot Soak, \$12). Salon pedis begin with a foot soak in a tub of warm water, and for good reason—it soothes sore muscles and softens skin. To reap those benefits at home, Day suggests soaking feet in a basin of lukewarm water mixed with ½ cup Epsom salt for 10 to 15 minutes. The salt relaxes tense tootsies and minimizes swelling, she says.

**EXPERT TIP** "Steer clear of a too-hot foot soak, which can irritate and dry out skin," Day says.

**TAKE A DIP** Epsom salts in warm water can soften skin.





**POLISH PERKS**  
Look for '3 Free' on labels, which should mean that the product doesn't contain the most toxic nail-polish chemicals.



## Avoid nail-ruining paint jobs

**What to buy** Choose a nail polish without chemicals that can yellow and dry the nail plate, says Splichal, who recommends Dr.'s Remedy Enriched Nail Polish, \$30. "It's free of formaldehyde, toluene, and dibutyl phthalate, and generally safer," she says.

**Expert tip** To head off discoloration and other problems, give your nails a polish break every few weeks, Splichal advises.



## Slough off dead skin

### WHAT TO BUY

Baby Foot Original Exfoliant Foot Peel, \$25, shown. "These gel-filled booties are

basically a chemical peel for feet, but safe enough that they only peel off the outer layers and leave the soft skin underneath," says Jessica Krant, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in New York City.

**EXPERT TIP** "Don't overdo it; feet need to be a bit tougher than the rest of your body," Krant says. Doing a peel at the start of sandal season and moisturizing nightly should keep your feet neat."

## Prevent nail and foot fungus

**What to buy** Tea tree oil. "It's a natural anti-fungal agent and very effective on foot fungus," says Wenjay Sung, DPM, a podiatrist based in Los Angeles, who recommends applying it once or twice per day to the infected area.

**Expert tip** Summer is prime season for foot fungus, but you can head off problems by not walking barefoot in public places and keeping feet dry and clean. And if you're a fan of salon pedicures, take your own sterile nail tools to prevent fungal foot infections.



## 3 THINGS NOT TO BUY

These foot-care gadgets are best left in the hands of professionals:

■ **CUTICLE CLIPPERS.** When the skin around the nail bed is cut, it's easier for germs to creep in and cause infection. Instead, push cuticles back with a wooden orange stick.

■ **CALLUS SHAVER.** Overly aggressive shaving can take off too much skin or cause breaks in the skin that allow infection-causing bacteria to enter.

■ **CORN-REMOVAL PADS.** These contain a high concentration of salicylic acid; if left on your foot too long, they could eat a hole in the skin.



# Buzz off calluses

Keeping your feet in top condition takes time, so we wondered whether products such as the new battery-operated PedEgg could make it faster and easier. In previous tests, our volunteer panelists found the original PedEgg—which works sort of like a kitchen microplane—to be better at removing calluses than a pumice stone. But the new battery-powered versions are claimed to give you smooth, beautiful feet in minutes, without manual rubbing. So we pitted two heavily promoted brands, the Amopé Pedi Perfect and PedEgg Power, against the original PedEgg. For our test, we asked 20 volunteers to use one of the battery-run gadgets on one foot and the original PedEgg on the other. Most agreed that the motorized gadgets took less work, but all three devices did the job. The downside: You won't get perfectly baby-soft feet with these gadgets, and the battery models left lots of yucky skin dust on our testers' floors. Also, most of the skin experts we talked to cautioned that the devices contain sharp blades or mechanized grinding surfaces that can damage your skin if you're not careful.

## AMOPÉ PEDI PERFECT, \$38 (with batteries)

### The claim

"Beautifully smooth skin after 1 use."

**Testers' notes** No device will get rid of really thick-skinned calluses in one swipe. All three of the devices we tested took a while to remove those areas. And one panelist said it was "easy to go too far" with the Amopé Pedi Perfect, which took off too much of her skin. It also left behind big piles of skin dust. Ewww!



## ORIGINAL PEDEGG PROFESSIONAL, \$12

**The claim** "Gently removes callous, dry skin."

**Testers' notes** This manual foot file isn't as quick and easy to use as battery-operated devices, but it's just as good at removing calluses. Several test panelists said it was easier to control than the battery-powered foot files.



## PEDEGG POWER, \$21 (batteries not included)

**The claim** "The fastest, easiest way to remove calluses."

### Testers' notes

Panelists gave it high scores, but several noted that they were disappointed in the amount of time it took to remove calluses. Some said the design of the roller—narrow and a bit indented—made it difficult to get at some calluses. It also created a mess of skin dust.

# Best buys at Lands' End

If you're looking for a figure-flattering swimsuit, Lands' End should be your first stop. Beyond staples like twill pants, cardigan sweaters, polo shirts, and other classic sportswear, the retailer is known for bathing suit styles for every body type. We love this season's slimming dresskinis (see the striped suit on the facing page) and tunic tops that you can swim in while keeping flabby arms and tummies under wraps. Paired with shorts, they can double as daytime wear. And because tops and bottoms are sold separately, you can get just the right fit. (NOTE: Price ranges reflect higher prices for plus sizes.)



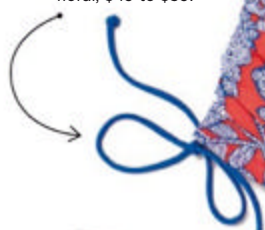
tummy  
hider

**Adjustable ties  
create bulge-  
concealing ruching.**

Shown: Women's adjustable tunic swim rash guard in kinetic floral, \$49 to \$59.

**Team a swim tunic  
with curve-enhancing  
boy shorts.**

Shown: Women's Beach Living boy short swimsuit bottom, \$35 to \$45.



**A floral print gives these  
sport sandals a girly vibe.**

Shown: Women's leather slide sandal, \$69.



**A go-with-everything carryall  
is a summer must.**

Shown: Medium open top tote in washed coral multi stripe print, \$34.



**For a custom  
touch, add  
a monogram.**

Shown: Women's fit Bermuda shorts, \$39 to \$49 plus \$6 for monogramming.

**LANDS' END**

## SHOPPING INFO YOU SHOULD KNOW

The retailer is known for its catalogs, but it has more than 200 Lands' End

Shops at Sears around the country. Go to [landsend.com](http://landsend.com) for locations. Shipping is free for online purchases of \$50 or more. Its return policy is the most generous around; you can return anything any time.





butt lifter

A no-ride-up construction cups and lifts your fanny.

Shown: Women's tugless tank soft cup one-piece in schooner print, \$59 to \$69.

This suit has cleavage-making front ruching and soft gel inserts.

Shown: Women's Beach Club push-up tankini top, \$75, and low-waist bikini bottom, \$35.



bust booster



plus-size figure flatterer

Strategically placed stripes slim your top half, and high-waisted bottoms suck in the tummy.

Shown: Women's Beach Living halter dresskini swimsuit top, \$95, and ultra high-waist bikini bottom with tummy control, \$55.



Flounce on top counterbalances a bottom-heavy figure.

Shown: Women's Beach Club ruffle bikini top, \$49.



thigh tamer

The A-line shape and longer length help hide saddlebags.

Shown: Women's Beach Living SwimMini swim skirt, \$59.



Colorblocked panels create an hourglass silhouette.

Shown: Women's AquaSport scoopneck one-piece swimsuit, \$69 to \$75.



pear-shape slimmer



A bold color top draws the eye up; dark bottoms slim.

Shown: Women's SwimMates string bikini top, \$39, and reversible bikini bottom, \$39.

waist whittler

# WANT EVEN MORE GREAT INFORMATION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS?

Get **immediate access** to all our  
Ratings, tests and CR Best Buy  
recommendations

**JUST \$30 FOR AN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION AND YOU'LL GET...**

## 24/7 ACCESS TO:

- ✔ **Latest product Ratings.** Plus reliability info on thousands of products.
- ✔ **Consumer Reports Mobile.\*** Access to ConsumerReports.org on your mobile phone.
- ✔ **Build & Buy car-buying service.** Experience the easy way to buy a car AND save money.
- ✔ **New! Car Repair Pricing.** Find out how much that next car repair should cost.
- ✔ **Price & Shop.** Buy electronics and appliances from reliable online stores. Now includes local shopping, too.
- ✔ **Health info.** Stay healthy with current drug, insurance, and health equipment Ratings.

Subscribe today at **[www.ConsumerReports.org/cr/shopsmart514](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/cr/shopsmart514)**

**ConsumerReports.org®**

\*Standard data and messaging rates apply. Check your carrier for accessibility.





**THESE WALLS  
HAVE EYES**  
The Nest thermostat  
can help you save  
energy—if you let it  
track your schedule.

## Your stuff is watching you!

New ‘smart’ devices are convenient—but they’re also collecting information on you and your family

**W**ouldn’t it be nice if you never had to pay attention to your thermostat because it’s always paying attention to you? So it knows, say, to turn on the A/C before you get home from work and to turn it off after you leave. Convenience like that is why people are

snapping up “smart” devices, such as the Nest thermostat (shown above), which collect data and connect to the Internet. They’re part of a trend called the Internet of Things, and they can do all kinds of really helpful stuff. These devices can, for example, send messages to your phone when your laundry is done,

or automatically unlock your front door as you approach with your arms full of groceries. Many smart devices—such as activity trackers that send data to apps to help you monitor your fitness or smart TVs that make it super-easy to connect to Netflix and other streaming services—are already mainstream.

But the conveniences come at a cost: They raise privacy and security concerns. Once your personal data and a record of your habits live on a company's server, there is no law dictating what that company may or may not do with that info. Many companies promise not to use it for marketing, but others contract with third parties that reserve the right to use whatever info they collect to sell ads. And an analysis our technology experts recently conducted with Georgetown Law's Center on Privacy & Technology found that the privacy policies for connected devices are often very vague and confusing.

Another concern: Hackers have just begun to take aim at the products, with frightening results. For example, researchers have proved that it's possible to remotely open some door locks and to peek at sleeping babies by accessing their monitors.

Those warnings aren't intended to say that you should avoid all connected products. They are pretty amazing! But you can take steps to protect yourself, as you'll see on page 71. First, here's a look at a dozen smart devices. We'll tell you what you need to know before you decide to buy one. Plus we offer "dumb" options to consider if the surveillance creeps you out.

**KNOW-IT-ALL GADGET**  
Ask the Amazon Echo anything, and it will give you the answers.



## Virtual assistant

### Amazon Echo, \$200

At a glance, it looks like a wireless speaker, and it is. But what's interesting about the Amazon Echo is that it connects to your Wi-Fi network and can respond to voice requests. Ask it for the weather report, the latest headlines, or the name of that song you can't get out of your head, and like Apple's Siri it will give you the answers. It can also control some connected home devices that work on Belkin's WeMo or Philips' Hue platforms, such as outlets and lightbulbs.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** Unless you push the mute button, the Echo's microphones are always on and listening for its wake word, "Alexa." Amazon says the device doesn't send any of your conversations to the cloud before you say the wake word, but once you do, everything you say is transmitted to remote servers.

**WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD** Bose SoundLink Color, \$130, a portable Bluetooth speaker without the other functions.





## Sleep machine

**Withings Aura, \$300\***

This high-tech sleep aid uses light and sound to help you fall asleep and wake up, and it monitors your zzz's, too. You slip the sleep sensor under your mattress, put the light-and-sound device on your nightstand, and download the Withings app to your smartphone.

### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

Withings follows strict privacy laws from France, its home country. Personally identifiable information—such as your name, e-mail address, password, and log-in—is encrypted. According to the company, information is shared only with partners specifically chosen by the user.

### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

Ecotones Sound+Sleep, \$100.\*



## Thermostat

**Nest, \$250**

You don't need to program the Nest; it uses motion detectors to learn your family's comings and goings and climate preferences, and sets its own schedule. It also allows you to control the A/C and heat from your smartphone. (Connected thermostats from competitors do that, too.)

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** Nest says that it doesn't use the data it collects for advertising—a big concern, considering that it's owned by Google. You could turn off the connected features—but then you've stripped away most of the value of an expensive item.

### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

Lux TX9600TS programmable thermostat, \$70, which outperformed higher-priced models in our tests.



## Baby monitor

**Foscam Plug and Play FI9826P, \$200\***

This monitor allows you to check in on your little one from anywhere. It has two-way audio, night-vision capabilities, and an adjustable viewing angle.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** Foscam made the news when hackers reportedly accessed a few of its monitors and started talking to babies or their caretakers through the device. But any Internet-connected monitor or security camera is vulnerable unless you change the default user name and password. Foscam also recommends that you check its website regularly for updates.

**WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD** Philips Avent DECT SCD510, \$120, an unconnected monitor that our testers recommend.



## Medical monitor

**FreeStyle Lite, \$20**

You can measure your blood sugar with a blood glucose meter like this one, which sends your results to an app and can even pass the data along to your doctor. Looking at a graph of your results over time gives you the bigger picture.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** If you use a monitor at a hospital or doctor's office, your info is protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the law that governs the privacy of medical records. FreeStyle encrypts data and says it doesn't share identifiable info with marketers.

**WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD** ReliOn Micro, \$15, our top-rated blood glucose meter, doesn't send the results anywhere.



## Treadmill

**NordicTrack Elite 9700 Pro Treadmill, \$2,200**

In addition to providing great ergonomics and a built-in heart-rate monitor, this treadmill coordinates with a mobile app called iFit. Members of the iFit network get an interactive training program, lots of stats on their progress, and the ability to share workout data.

### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

NordicTrack claims it doesn't share user data with third parties. It encrypts information during transmission and collection. And if you don't want your workouts tracked, you don't have to join iFit.

### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

The highly rated AFG 7.1 AT, \$1,700.



## Activity tracker

**Fitbit One, \$100**

Activity trackers record your steps and calories; some also monitor sleep, record your heart rate or the distance of your swim, or map a run with built-in GPS. You can connect them to apps such as MyFitnessPal to track your progress.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** Not all activity trackers encrypt the data they send to an app. That leaves the potential for your name, address, password, and location to be grabbed by a hacker. Fitbit didn't confirm whether it encrypts the data it collects, but it says your info is stored on its servers.

**WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD** Yamax Digi-Walker CW-701, \$30, an old-school pedometer that our testers like.

\*We did not test this product in our labs.



#### OUR LITTLE SECRET?

Your scale is one device you probably don't want blabbing to anyone!

## Bathroom scale

**Fitbit Aria Wi-Fi Smart Scale, \$130\***

Fitbit, the activity-tracker company, also aims to help you lose weight with its Internet-connected scale. You weigh yourself, and the number is transmitted to an app that helps you track your weight. It also logs what you've eaten and records your workouts.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?** Fitbit says it doesn't sell personal user data to third parties. As with the Fitbit One activity tracker (featured on the previous page), data is stored on company servers.

**WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD** Taylor 7506, \$35, which weighs you the old-fashioned way, so only you can see the number.



## Laundry machines

**Whirlpool Smart Front Load Washer WFL98HEBU, \$1,500; Smart Front Load Dryer WEL98HEBU, \$1,500**

You can access controls for this washer and dryer remotely through your smartphone. So if you put in a load of wash in the morning but are going to get home from work late, you turn on FanFresh mode, which cycles air through damp laundry to prevent it from becoming musty. Also, the machines can coordinate with the Nest thermostat. For example, the dryer can switch to a slower, more energy-efficient mode if the Nest tells it no one is home.

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

Whirlpool's privacy policy allows the company to target users with its own marketing messages, and because the device is connected, info on when you use the machines and whether you're operating them remotely resides on Whirlpool's servers. That might be worthwhile if you love the idea of having remote access to your laundry machines.

#### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

Our top-rated washer and dryer are the Samsung WF56H9110CW, \$1,450, and Samsung DV56H9100EG, \$1,500.





## Door lock

### Kwikset Kevo, \$220

The Kevo, and similar products from companies including Schlage and August, will unlock itself as you approach, as long as you have your smartphone or an electronic fob with you. You can also send electronic keys to the smartphones of houseguests or workers who need temporary access to your home, which is more secure than sharing conventional metal keys.

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

Kevo says it won't share user info with third parties, but the company does collect data for its own promotions. Researchers have figured out how to hack into other connected locks—but there's an easier way to beat the Kevo: The lock performed poorly in our kick-in test.

#### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

Kwikset 980, \$30, was the top lock in our test, and it will keep your info as well as your house secure.



## Coffeemaker

### Mr. Coffee Smart Optimal Brew, \$150

You can talk to it, programming brew times from your phone or turning it on from your bed. And it can talk to you, sending reminders to replace a filter, for example. Mr. Coffee uses Belkin's WeMo app, which can also control a number of security cameras, lightbulbs, and other household gadgets.

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

Belkin says it uses the data it collects about your coffee-drinking habits for marketing purposes only if you opt in.

#### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

The Mr. Coffee Optimal Brew Coffee Maker with Thermal Carafe, \$70, has all of the nonconnected features of the smart version—and costs less than half the price.



## Smart TV

### Samsung UN55JU6700, \$1,400

Many TVs, such as this one from Samsung and certain LG models, can respond to your spoken requests ("Find me a Brad Pitt movie") and have a recommendation feature that suggests content based on what you watch.

#### WHAT ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY?

To process voice commands, smart TVs send clips of your speech to a third-party company over the Internet. Many also have built-in content-recognition technology that can identify the shows and even DVDs that you play, then serve up interactive content or customized ads. (For example, Samsung smart-TV owners were invited to buy David Beckham underwear using their remotes while watching an H&M ad during the Super Bowl.) If those features creep you out, you can use the settings menu to turn them off.

#### WHAT YOU CAN BUY INSTEAD

LG 55LF6000, \$680, a bargain-priced set that doesn't connect to the Internet.

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR INFO SECURE

Like the convenience of connected devices but want to preserve as much of your privacy as possible? Here's how:

### 1. Read the privacy policy.

We know they're basically written in a foreign language. But if you're about to buy expensive equipment, it pays to at least try to understand what the company says about its business practices. Look for clues about whether your data can be used for marketing or shared with business partners or other third parties. Also see whether you can

opt out of data sharing. But be aware that policies can change at any time.

### 2. Password-protect devices.

This is especially important for baby monitors, security cameras, and other devices that offer a highly personal look at your life. Make sure your Wi-Fi network has a strong password, too.

### 3. Keep up with security updates.

Check manufacturers' websites frequently to see whether a device has an update; it can help protect your data. Regularly update

the apps on your phone, too.

### 4. Turn off creepy features.

Look for "off" options in your smartphone settings; you might be able to block the features that you find intrusive, such as location services and voice recognition.

### 5. Buy the 'dumb' version.

As devices get more advanced, connected features will become more common. But in most cases, you should still be able to choose a nonconnected version that does the basics—for less money.

# My disconnected year

She learned the hard way what it takes to thwart data collectors



**Julia Angwin**  
author of  
"Dragnet Nation:  
A Quest for  
Privacy, Security,  
and Freedom in  
a World of  
Relentless  
Surveillance"  
(Times Books/  
Henry Holt, 2014)

It's easy to feel exposed and afraid when so much of your personal data seems to be out there for the taking. Julia Angwin, who had been covering digital privacy for the Wall Street Journal and ProPublica, became increasingly concerned that

she was making people feel even worse by reporting on threats to our Internet security and personal privacy, without having much advice. So she decided to spend a year living disconnected from any technology that captured her personal info or tracked her behavior. It wasn't easy or cheap because she had to pay for services that prioritized privacy. Here's what she learned, plus the tools she used.

## Q Who's after our information, and why should we be concerned?

I'm concerned about both the government and private institutions. The government has ramped up its surveillance since 9/11 and is collecting a lot more information than it ever has before. Meanwhile, companies such as Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn have business models based on building dossiers on customers and making that information available to advertisers. I understand that they need to make money, but I don't want to participate, and I don't want my data in those dossiers because there are no laws limiting what they could do with them.

## Q What are some of the things you learned?

Some parts of privacy are about tech literacy—learning how to be a more sophisticated user of certain services. Other parts are just a matter of money. I pay for services other people get for free, such as e-mail and encrypted cloud storage. When I added up the numbers for the various services I used over a year and discovered I had spent \$2,500, I was pretty shocked. I've learned that I probably could have done this at a

more reasonable cost. But it's unfair. People shouldn't have to go through this much work.

## Q What behaviors did you have to change?

I had to become more patient. In our modern, connected lives, we've come to believe that everything should be instant. I do a lot of encrypted e-mail, and I can only check it on my computer. If I'm away from my computer, I may not be able to read my e-mail for a day. Back in the old days, you'd check voice mail at the end of the day, and it would be totally fine that you hadn't heard something for 12 hours. Now there's this anxiety about having an e-mail on your phone and not being able to read it. But I've come to learn that these things aren't all that urgent.

## Q Was there anything you just couldn't do without?

My smartphone. It's the perfect tracking device. I have it with me all the time, and it's constantly in connection with all kinds of networks. I tried for a while to carry a second phone that I bought with cash and wasn't tied to my identity. But it was really hard to manage. I'm a mother. I have two kids, and they never knew which phone I had with me. So I eventually gave that up.

## 5 PRIVACY-PROTECTING SERVICES

You can try them all—they're free except for the SpiderOak service.

### DUCKDUCKGO

This search engine doesn't track your location or create a search history. When Angwin saw her Google history dating back to 2006, she said, "It was more intimate than a diary. Once I saw that, I didn't want to use Google anymore."

### HTTPS EVERYWHERE

Download this browser extension (it works with Chrome, Firefox, and Opera) and it will encrypt all of your communications with many major websites, which will keep outsiders from snooping on you.

### DISCONNECT

Another browser add-on, this one denies ad-tracking requests from Web pages.

### SPIDEROAK

This service costs \$129 per year, but you get encrypted Web storage—a privacy-protecting alternative to the free storage options from companies such as Amazon and Google.

### RISEUP.NET

This e-mail service is so securely encrypted that even Riseup can't access your e-mail.



BOTTOM: IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES



# Time to buy!


Why you want one of these now

**W**hy bother with a smartwatch when your smartphone is always by your side? Because it's not by your side—it's on your wrist! There's no need to pull it out of a pocket or purse; with a quick glance you can not only find out the time but also view text messages, e-mails, calendar alerts, and social-media updates—and even respond to them. Rather than constantly reaching for your phone to check it, you can relax because you know your watch will alert you if something important comes up.

The Apple Watch gets most of the buzz (and it is our top-rated model), but two others are worth a look, too. Most smartwatches have voice controls and touch screens, though the Pebble, at right, and some others have buttons. Each of our Smart Picks has unique features we love, and all of them offer low-light readability and can handle calls with a paired phone or other device.

Bottom line: If you ever wondered how you got along without your smartphone, just wait until you strap on one of these babies!

## Best smartwatches

11 TESTED  3 SMART PICKS

our  
fave

bargain  
buy

### APPLE WATCH

**Price** \$550 (for 38mm version)

**Why we like it** It has an advantage over the cheaper Sport model, \$350: a sapphire crystal face that our testers found impossible to scratch. But all six versions have loads of built-in apps and include a fitness tracker and coach. You can also use it to control your phone's camera and do a lot more. Battery life is 18 hours.

**Works with** iPhone.

**Where to get it** [apple.com](http://apple.com)

### PEBBLE STEEL

**Price** \$200

**Why we like it** It costs less than the other models and has button controls and a black-and-white screen. The battery lasts up to a week. And it can go underwater up to 164 feet. It comes with a leather band, or you can buy a metal one.

**Works with** Android and iPhone.

**Where to get it** [getpebble.com](http://getpebble.com)

### MOTOROLA MOTO 360

**Price** \$250

**Why we like it**

It has voice controls, a heart-rate monitor, and a pedometer. And you can choose from three case colors, 11 watch faces, and nine leather or metal bands. Motorola says battery life is 5 to 7 days.

**Works with** Android.

**Where to get it** [motorola.com](http://motorola.com)

for  
Android  
users

# Drive and thrive

## Podcasts that can change your life on the road

### OUR EXPERT



**Donna Tapellini**  
electronics  
editor

I have a long commute. Odds are you do, too; Americans spend an average of 46 minutes per day driving. But that can be a good thing: It means you've got time for a daily podcast or two. If you're not already taking advantage of those entertaining and often educational snippets, you're missing out. One of my favorites is NPR's "On Being," an award-winning show that covers some big life questions. But I always keep an ear out for new offerings. (You can find podcasts on Google Play and iTunes.) Here are a few gems worth a listen:



### Living Homegrown

Theresa Loe, a producer of PBS's "Growing a Greener World," tells you how to live like a farmer, without the farm. Loe interviews experts and answers questions about homegrown topics such as

canning, making yogurt, and gardening in small spaces.



### Rituals

When the reporter Laura Ling was imprisoned in North Korea while filming a documentary, she developed a ritual of identifying something to feel grateful for each day—even something as simple as a glimpse of a butterfly. That experience inspired her to create this podcast, which uncovers rituals used by others—such as the firefighter who copes with the trauma of his job by climbing stairs. Ling's podcast is a special exploration of resilience in the face of challenge.



### Nocturne

What's it like driving a truck through the night? Working as a baker in the wee hours? Staying up all night because your body

is "trapped in the wrong time," as one of Nocturne's subjects put it? As people tell their stories, Vanessa Lowe, the producer, adds her insights on how being active through the night can transform the way people experience life.



### Imaginary Worlds

The creator of this show calls it sci-fi, but it's much more. In one of my favorite episodes, Zombie Therapy, the narrator wonders why his buddy, an assistant district attorney, likes to unwind with "The Walking Dead" after dealing with real-life gruesomeness all day. The answer reveals the gist of this podcast: exploring alternative universes that inspire enduring devotion from their fans.



### Unwonk

You lend a friend money, then she claims bankruptcy. Now what? You'll enjoy listening as Unwonk's attorneys humorously unpack the many complications—legal and social—behind that question and many more.

**LISTEN UP!** Expand your horizons by enjoying a podcast instead of your usual music playlists.



# Tech news

## The best free security software

Sure, you want to protect your PC from online creeps who would love to steal your identity or infect your computer with a nasty virus. But before you download that expensive, full-featured security suite, stop and grab the free version instead. Our experts found that free software offers enough protection for most users. The paid versions, which cost as much as \$100 per year, add parental controls, so if those are important to you, pony up. But you don't have to pay for things like a firewall (which is already built into your operating system), anti-phishing tools to warn you of dangerous sites (the tools are built into your browser), and spam blockers (which live in your e-mail service). For even stronger anti-phishing tools, try a toolbar available at [siteadvisor.com](http://siteadvisor.com) or [netcraft.com](http://netcraft.com). Then add a free antivirus program to protect against malware. See below for the best packages that our experts tested; all did a great job blocking the everyday threats you're likely to encounter.



**What to get** Avira  
Free Antivirus 2015  
**Where to get it**  
[avira.com](http://avira.com)



**What to get** Avast  
Free Antivirus 2015  
**Where to get it**  
[avast.com](http://avast.com)



**What to get** AVG  
AntiVirus Free 2015  
**Where to get it**  
[avg.com](http://avg.com)

**NOTE TO MAC USERS** Apple computers are much less likely to be attacked by viruses and spyware, but they're not immune—and they can transmit infected files to PCs. So our experts recommend downloading free Mac security software at [avast.com](http://avast.com) or [sophos.com](http://sophos.com).

Butt-dialing isn't the only risk when you carry your phone in a back pocket.



## PAIN IN THE BEHIND?

Turns out that stashing your phone in your back pocket can trigger pain that may start in your backside and shoot down your leg. It's called sciatica, referring to the pressure on your sciatic nerve, says our medical advisor, neurologist Orly Avitzur, who has seen a number of patients with that problem. One of them thought the seat in his car was causing the pain, so he was pleased to learn that the solution was cheaper and easier than buying a new vehicle, having surgery, or taking drugs. All he had to do was find a new place to carry his iPhone!

## Watch out for hidden cable costs

How does a triple-play deal with TV, Internet, and phone service advertised for \$79.99 per month turn into a bill for more than \$100? Blame sneaky hidden costs like equipment surcharges and lots of extra fees. Those line items aren't exactly hidden, but they're buried in fine print that you could easily miss in your euphoria over saving big bucks. (The average U.S. household pays more than \$150 per month.) We looked at recent

promos from Cablevision Optimum, Comcast Xfinity, and Verizon FiOS that included these monthly "extras":

- **Regional sports networks, \$4**
- **Broadcast surcharge, \$2**
- **HD set-top box, \$8 to \$12 each**
- **DVR service, \$13 to \$17**

Then there are taxes and government fees, which can easily exceed \$10.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?** Nail down the total cost before you sign up. Ask how long the price is good; promo deals usually expire after a few months. Then ask for a better deal, such as discounted DVR service, free installation, or an extension to the promo price. In our surveys, almost 9 out of 10 people who ask for a better bundle deal get it. But many fees are fixed, so don't be surprised if you can't talk your way out of them.

# The cars we'd buy again

Vehicles that women love the most—and the least!

**W**hat do women want? Safe, reliable, and fuel-efficient transportation. Men, on the other hand, want power. Sounds like stereotyping, but it's true, according to our latest owner-satisfaction survey, which included data on more than 1 million vehicles.

In the survey, we asked car owners whether they would buy the same vehicle if they had to do it all over again. Many women said they'd go for another Subaru Forester, Toyota Highlander, or Toyota Prius. Men were more likely to list sporty cars like the Chevrolet Corvette and various Porsche models. The one car that got high marks from men and women is the Tesla Model S, shown below.

This is the first year we've separated the results of our annual auto survey by gender. (Conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center,

it's limited to the three most recent model years.) So what else do women like? Hybrids are more popular with female drivers than male drivers. Other than the Tesla, the only hybrid to make the men's favorites list was the Honda Accord Hybrid. But it's not all about fuel economy. The Chevrolet Silverado and Toyota Tacoma pickup trucks got high marks from women. In the luxury category, women said they would be happy to buy certain models of Mercedes-Benz or Lexus again.

The most interesting—but not surprising—survey finding was that women know what's good. Whether it's a luxury car, an SUV, a pickup truck, or a wagon, the list of women's favorites is comprised almost entirely of vehicles that got top scores at our auto test track. The same can't be said about the guys' choices, according to our auto experts. We're right yet again!

## most loved overall

### TESLA MODEL S

**Price** \$76,200 to \$106,200

**Testers' notes** It's our highest-rated car ever; both men and women agreed. You get smooth power and a luxurious, high-tech interior with this innovative electric vehicle. And you can drive 180 to 225 miles on a charge.



**ROOM TO ZOOM** The Tesla is the first electric car that can drive almost as far as gas-fueled autos between fuel-ups.





**LONG-DISTANCE CRUISER**  
The E Class boasts a plush ride and supportive seats.

## most loved luxury car

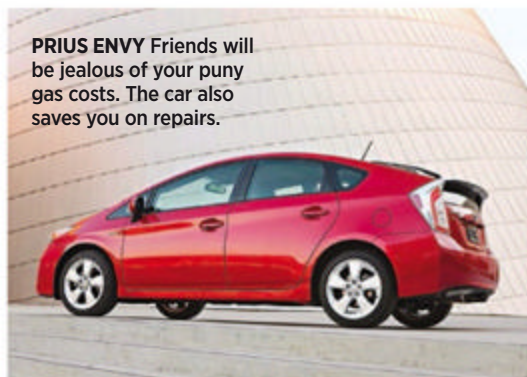
### MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS SEDAN (V6)

**Price** \$53,575 to \$102,675

**Testers' notes** The ultimate high-end car, it's also one of our top-scoring vehicles overall. You get both pampering and performance.

#### Runner-up

- Lexus ES (gas and hybrid)



**PRIUS ENVY** Friends will be jealous of your puny gas costs. The car also saves you on repairs.

## most loved family car

### TOYOTA PRIUS

**Price** \$25,025 to \$30,830

**Testers' notes** Excellent fuel economy, solid reliability, and a spacious interior make the Prius easy to fall in love with.

#### Runners-up

- Volkswagen Passat TDI
- Honda Accord
- Ford Fusion



The Volt will give you a jolt!

## HE LIKES, SHE LIKES

### WOMEN'S TOP 5

1. Tesla Model S
2. Toyota Prius
3. Mercedes-Benz E-Class sedan (V6)
4. Subaru Forester (nonturbo)
5. Chevrolet Volt

### MEN'S TOP 5

1. Tesla Model S
2. Chevrolet Corvette Stingray
3. Porsche Boxster
4. Porsche Cayman
5. Porsche 911

## most loved small SUV

### SUBARU FORESTER (NONTURBO)

**Price** \$23,045 to \$33,945

**Testers' notes** It's reliable, roomy, and has an unusually spacious rear seat. The Forester's other virtues include excellent visibility and intuitive controls.

#### Runner-up

- Jeep Cherokee



**HIGH RIDER** The Forester's extra height makes it easy to get in and out.

**ALL IN** The Highlander has seating for seven or eight with optional second-row captain's chairs.



## most loved mid-sized SUV

### TOYOTA HIGHLANDER (V6)

**Price** \$30,050 to \$51,125

**Testers' notes** A perennial top-scorer among mid-sized SUVs, the Highlander offers a roomy, family-friendly interior and rock-solid reliability.

#### Runners-up

- Lexus RX
- Lexus GX



## most loved minivan/wagon

### SUBARU OUTBACK (6-CYLINDER)

**Price** \$25,745 to \$33,845

**Testers' notes** With all-wheel drive and a surprisingly roomy interior, the Outback offers carlike handling and SUV utility.

#### Runners-up

- Toyota Prius V
- Toyota Sienna (FWD)
- Honda Odyssey



Women want to kick their Kia Sportage to the curb.

## LEAST LOVED

The Nissan Sentra stands out as the one model that makes the worst-cars list of men and women. Here's the full breakdown of the vehicles that got the lowest owner-satisfaction scores.

#### WOMEN'S BOTTOM 5

1. Dodge Journey
2. Nissan Sentra
3. Kia Sportage
4. Volkswagen Jetta
5. Volkswagen Tiguan

#### MEN'S BOTTOM 5

1. Nissan Sentra
2. Jeep Compass
3. Nissan Versa
4. Kia Optima Hybrid
5. Ford Escape (4-cylinder, nonturbo)



The mantra of Nissan Sentra owners: Never again!



# Made in the USA?

How to buy a great American car. (It's not as simple as it sounds!)

If you're shopping for a new car and you'd like to buy American, you might be surprised by your choices. That's because it's entirely possible for a Honda or Toyota to have more American content than a Chrysler, Ford, or GM vehicle. Toyota Camrys, for instance, are assembled in Kentucky. The Jeep brand, however, isn't as all-American as it used to be. The new Jeep Renegade is assembled in Italy.

To make things even more confusing, some U.S. cars are more North American than American. The Chevrolet Impala, for example, is assembled in Detroit if you order one with a four-cylinder engine, but V6 models come from Canada.

So how can you tell whether you're really buying American? Check the car's window sticker. Back in the 1990s, Congress passed the

American Automobile Labeling Act, which requires new cars to display a parts-content label. It specifies the final assembly point—what most of us think of as “the factory”—as well as the country of origin for the engine and transmission, and the percentage of the car's value that can be claimed as American or Canadian. Everywhere else is “foreign.”

Why is Canada considered domestic? Because Detroit's Big Three automakers had a lot of factories across the Detroit River in Ontario, and they wanted the cars made there to count as American.

To make it easy to buy a “Made in the U.S.A.” vehicle, our experts restricted their picks at right to vehicles assembled at factories in the continental U.S., and that have engines and transmissions mostly made here as well.

## Best

These vehicles are built in the U.S., with domestic parts accounting for at least 60 percent of their value. Our experts recommend them because they performed well in our tests, they scored at least average in our reliability surveys, and they did OK in crash tests:

### SUVS

- Acura MDX
- Acura RDX
- Chevrolet Traverse
- Dodge Durango
- GMC Acadia
- Toyota Highlander

### SEDANS

- Buick LaCrosse
- Buick Verano
- Chevrolet Malibu
- Honda Accord
- Toyota Avalon
- Toyota Camry

### WAGONS/MINIVANS

- Honda Odyssey
- Toyota Sienna
- Toyota Venza

### SPORTS CAR

- Chevrolet Corvette Stingray

## Worst

Among U.S.-made cars, these scored too low in our tests for us to recommend them:

- Jeep Wrangler
- Jeep Compass
- Jeep Patriot
- Chrysler 200
- Honda Crosstour
- Lincoln MKS
- Ford Taurus





# Shop and get cash back

Shopping ‘portals’ promise to save you money on everything you buy. Here’s how to make them work for you.

Sites that promise you cash back or other rewards for making purchases through an online mega mall are hot again. The so-called shopping portals, which corral a bunch of retailers in one place and reward you for shopping, are nothing new, but thanks to a spate of recent TV ads, traffic is up. Will they really save you money? We took a look at the biggest portals, including Ebates and Upromise, plus a few new ones, to see what you actually get for making purchases through them and which ones might be best for you.

## HOW DO THEY WORK?

Think of them as a way to collect a rebate without the pressure of remembering to fill out and mail in those pesky forms. When you click over to a portal, you’ll see the retailers listed and the cash-back deals each one offers. The portals make money by striking deals with retailers that net them a commission for every purchase they refer. After they get paid, they pass on a portion of that money to the shopper who made it all possible—you. If you want to get in on the action, create an account at a portal and use it as

a starting point each time you shop. (Banks, frequent-flyer plans, and hotel-rewards programs operate portals, too, usually offering rewards in the form of points.)

## HOW MUCH CAN I SAVE?

It varies. Different portals often offer different payout rates for the same stores, and those rates change often. For example, when we checked, the payout rate for Bloomingdale’s was 2 percent at BeFrugal.com and 16 percent at ShopAtHome.com. Rates can even vary from product to product for the same retailer.



So Ebates might give you 16 percent cash back on magazines bought at Amazon.com but just 3 percent on a watch. Also, some stores offer beefed-up percentages during holidays. To compare rates at various places, you can first check an aggregator such as CashbackHolic.com, CashbackMonitor.com, evreward.com, or Pick2Pay.






#### SHOULD I USE THEM?

You won't get rich, and using a portal does add one more step to the shopping process, but they are a way to score extra savings on products you're planning to buy anyway. The sites are also handy for finding coupons, sales, and freebies. (See page 82 for some smart tips for maximizing your savings.)

#### WHICH ONE SHOULD I USE?

If you prefer an app, try BeFrugal, Ebates, or ShopAtHome. If you want to fund a college education, Upromise makes sense; it puts your rewards into a 529 fund. If you prefer cash, your best choice will depend on where you shop, how you want your rewards, and what extras are important to you; see the chart below.

## How the portals stack up

PORTAL					
<b>PARTICIPATING RETAILERS</b>	4,000-plus	1,800	"Hundreds"	3,000-plus	850-plus
<b>MAX CASH BACK</b>	Up to 30 percent of purchase price	Up to 25 percent	N/A	Up to 70 percent	5 percent-plus
<b>WHEN YOU GET PAYOUTS</b>	When you earn \$25 in rewards, you can start collecting cash back. You must request payouts, processed monthly.	\$5.01; credits post within 30 days. Makes automatic quarterly payments.	\$10; credits post between 7 and 90 days. Must request payments.	Credits post within 7 days, but travel credits can take up to 60 days after trip completion.	Varies by plan, but anywhere from \$15 to \$50. Automatic quarterly transfers.
<b>PAYOUT METHODS</b>	Check, gift card, or PayPal	Check, PayPal, or charity donation	Check or PayPal	Check	Deposit into college savings plan, payment on student loan, or check (\$10 fee)
<b>SIGN-UP BONUS?</b>	No	\$5 or \$10 gift card, awarded after first \$25-plus purchase	No	No	No
<b>ADDITIONAL SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lets you stack coupons with cash-back offers.</li> <li>■ Browser add-on pops up to show offers when you shop on participating retailers' sites.</li> <li>■ Bonus Cash Back section features retailers offering higher payouts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lets you stack coupons with cash-back offers.</li> <li>■ Browser add-on, Cash Back Button, alerts you to deals.</li> <li>■ Tell-A-Friend referral lets you earn when friends shop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tell-A-Friend referral program gives you \$5 for each friend who spends \$25 within a year.</li> <li>■ User forums let shoppers share saving tips.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Browser add-on pops up when you're on a participating site.</li> <li>■ Free mobile app (Android and Apple) connects you with exclusive offers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ RewardU toolbar alerts you to deals when you're on a participating site.</li> </ul>
<b>EDITOR'S NOTES</b>	It has the most generous cash-back guarantee, 125 percent. So if another portal has a better reward, it will match it plus an additional 25 percent.	This granddaddy of them all has a long track record and has paid out more than \$250 million so far.	FatWallet wins the cleanest layout award, with Today's Best Deals front and center.	Like BeFrugal.com, it has a cash-back guarantee on reward rates, in this case 110 percent.	Upromise pays you just for using the site for Internet searches: 1 cent per five searches, up to \$20 per year.

## HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CASH BACK

**First, find the best price.** It won't do you any good to get cash back if you're paying too much in the first place. So your first step is the same as it always is: Do a search to find the lowest price for the item you want. Some portals offer their own price-checking tools, but we haven't tested them. Our previous tryouts of price-comparison tools have shown that Google.com/shopping is the most reliable place to find the lowest price, including shipping.

**Get a coupon code.** Once you've picked the site, look for coupon codes. RetailMeNot is our go-to resource. (Just make sure you can still earn your rewards if you use a coupon.)

**Have a strategy.** There are two main approaches when it comes to using portals.

**Option 1:** If you want to claim your cash as quickly as possible, pick a rewards program that pays out well for the sites you shop most often, and stick with it.

**Option 2:** If you want to earn the most money possible on each transaction, use an aggregator to uncover the portal that currently has the largest cash-back offer for the site you chose in step one, and wait for your payouts to accumulate.

So let's say you want to buy a vacuum at Macy's. With Option 1, you go to your preferred portal and click through to Macys.com, taking whatever rewards are currently being offered. With Option 2, let's say CashbackHolic.com shows you that the best deal comes from BeFrugal.

com, which is offering 6 percent back.

So you head there to begin your purchase.

**Click to buy.** To make sure you get your credit every time you shop, start every purchase by logging in to your chosen portal and clicking through to your chosen retailer. Portals use cookies to track your movements, which means you'll need to enable them—either across the board or for individual portals—via your browser or firewall software. Also, portals recommend that you make your purchase relatively quickly and that you don't click around the Internet before coming back to the checkout screen—so no side jaunts to check your e-mail or Facebook. And you can't preload your cart at the retailer's site, then use the link to go to the checkout page; you have to click through from the portal. And if you buy one thing, then decide to go back and buy something else, each purchase must originate at the portal.

**Track your rewards.** The time to post your rewards varies from portal to portal. Check periodically to make sure you are getting credit for all of your purchases.

**Take advantage of guarantees.**

Some sites promise that they have—or will meet—the best cash-back percentage out there. With ShopAtHome.com's 110-percent guarantee, for example, if you find a better rebate rate at another portal, the site will pay you 110 percent of that rate, which means you'll get the full reward plus an additional 10 percent.



## 3 questions to ask before you pick a shopping portal

### 1. CAN I STILL USE COUPON

**CODES?** Some portals offer codes that are designed to work with their programs. But other cash-back deals can be negated if you try to stack on a coupon code. **Smart tip:** If you see a coupon that will save you more than you'd gain in cash back, use the coupon.

### 2. CAN I USE MY SHOPRUNNER

**MEMBERSHIP?** If you use ShopRunner, a \$79 annual service that gets you free two-day shipping at lots of retailers (it's free for many American Express users), BeFrugal.com says you can't use it and still collect rewards. Other sites may have similar exclusions where

other services are concerned.

### 3. CAN I CHANGE MY ORDER?

Changing your payment method or shipping address after checkout could void your credit. The portals we checked say that rather than making any changes after checkout, you should cancel your order and start over.



# recalls&safetyalerts

## Did you buy it?



### **ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWER VACS THAT MIGHT CATCH FIRE**

**THE RECALL:**  
**823,000 Homelite**

**brand and 225,000 Expert Gardener brand electric blower vacuums** sold at Home Depot and Walmart, respectively. The Homelite models were sold from January 2010 through March 2015 for about \$40. The Expert Gardener blowers were sold from January 2012 through March 2015, also for about \$40. The vacuum can overheat, spark, and catch fire. There have been 1,369 reports of the Homelite vacuum sparking, arcing, smoking, or burning, and 16 reports of the Expert Gardener doing the same. A similar recall was issued in February 2013.

**IF YOU OWN ONE** Stop using the blower vacuum immediately and return it to the store where you purchased it for a refund.



### **BIKES WITH WHEELS THAT CAN FALL OFF**

**THE RECALL:**

**900,000 Trek bicycles.** This recall involves all Treks, model years 2000 through 2015, that are equipped with front disc brakes. The bicycles were sold nationwide from September 1999 through April 2015 for \$480 to \$1,650. A quick-release lever on the bicycle's front wheel hub, if left in the open or unlocked position, can come into contact with the front disc brake assembly while you're riding. If that occurs, the front wheel could come to a sudden stop or separate from the bicycle, which could cause serious injuries. The manufacturer has reported three incidents with injuries.

**IF YOU OWN ONE** Stop using the bicycle and contact Trek at 800-373-4594 to find a local dealer who will install a new quick-release lever free of charge.



### **OVERHEATING LAPTOP BATTERIES**

**THE RECALL: 148,800 Lenovo ThinkPad notebook computer battery packs** sold individually and with various ThinkPad laptops at computer and electronics stores nationwide from February 2010 through June 2012 for \$80 to \$150 (when sold individually) or \$350 to \$3,000 (when sold as part of ThinkPad notebook computers). The battery pack can overheat while the laptop is in use, posing a risk of fire.

**IF YOU OWN ONE** Turn off your ThinkPad computer, remove the battery pack, and contact Lenovo at 800-426-7378 or go to [lenovo.com](http://lenovo.com) to get a free replacement battery. You can still use the ThinkPad without the battery pack by using the AC power adapter.



## IT'S OUTRAGEOUS! YouTube's App for Kids

**THE ISSUE** Google recently launched an app geared toward children ages 5 and younger called YouTube Kids. The company says it's "the first Google product built from the ground up with little ones in mind." The app is supposed to make the popular video site a safer place for them by limiting their access to age-appropriate, parent-approved content. But that sanctioned content is intermingled with "user generated" videos that are actually program-length commercials for the toys and candy they feature. The targeted advertising is deceptive because it doesn't provide clear separation between advertising and children's programming.

**WHAT WE THINK** Shame on Google for offering an app that markets heavily to children. Several consumer groups, including Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of our publisher, Consumer Reports, have filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission requesting an investigation. Safeguards for children's television programming were created because kids can't differentiate between commercials and programming. Google has gone too far in blurring that line with its new app.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO** Go to [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint) to share your concerns about the unfair and deceptive ads. And be sure to keep your computers and mobile devices in a common area of your home where you can supervise your child's use of them, just in case something inappropriate pops up.

## **⚠️ DON'T BUY IT**

### **SAFETY RISK**

**BRINKMANN  
810-6230-S, \$130**

Two of these two-burner gas grills failed our drop-lid safety test. Flames on one of the burners occasionally went out when set on low heat, but the gas stayed on. We were not aware of any reported injuries at press time, and the risk from that situation is low, but no gas grill should have that flaw. If you own this model, call the manufacturer at 800-527-0717 to request a new crossover channel. (We did, and the problem was fixed.) Or you can try to return the grill at the store where you bought it. If you must use it in the meantime, use only the high heat setting. Home Depot has directed its stores to stop selling the grills until Brinkmann has retrofitted them with the new crossover channel. We'll buy a retrofitted grill when it's available, and when we can confirm that the fix works, we'll remove our safety alert.





## The broken (and broke) hearts club

Before there was Match.com, there were lonely hearts columns in newspapers and magazines. But like today, blind dates could be risky. We wrote about a heartbreaker named Wanda Moore, who lured men with a personal ad soliciting funds so that she could come for a visit. Wanda took the money but didn't show up—until the cops caught up with her!



## Exercise at your own risk

Working out was considered trendy—and potentially dangerous—in the 1960s. “Faddists are continually proclaiming the value of exercise ... (but) four people out of five are more in need of rest,” warned Logan Clendening, M.D. We reported that many doctors believed vigorous

exercise might actually be harmful. But we also said that although there was no “definitive” evidence exercise is good for your physical health, we quoted one doctor who said it was a “delightful antidote for nervous tension and strains” and that it gave him “mental repose.” Right on!



### FASHION FORWARD

## Must-see TV

When Panasonic rolled out the wearable Starstream TV set, it declared “the death of ugly television.” Our take: It was more like the birth of ugly wearable technology. This TV not only didn't work very well as a fashion accessory but it also just plain didn't work very well, according to our testers.



## WHAT THE HECK IS IT?

It's Sylvania's Sun Bowl Home Ripener, which was \$16.95—or an eye-popping \$114 in today's dollars. The marketing pitch: “Lovers of fruit won't get tip-top flavor, aroma, and appearance unless the object of their desires has reached full maturity in the orchard”—or in this gadget. Our testers said that the Sun Bowl improved the taste of bananas a “tiny bit,” but you had to switch the device on or off every 12 hours. Our advice: File this product under “Stuff you didn't know you needed, and never will!”

## WHAT'S IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Look for us on newsstands on July 14

### Organic foods for less

Our secret-shopper price scan reveals where to find the best prices.

### Healthy new supermarket buys

Good-for-you food trends—plus 'healthy' fads to skip.

### Bargain shopper alert!

What's better than a coupon? A coupon app! Here are some of our favorites for maxing out savings.

**PLUS** Here's what we're testing next in our labs:

- Blood pressure monitors
- Bottled health waters
- Garden hoses
- Laptops and tablets
- Printers
- Sports drinks
- And more

For more great shopping tips, check out our daily blog at [ShopSmart.org](http://ShopSmart.org).

**HOW TO REACH US/EDITORIAL** CONSUMER REPORTS ShopSmart, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057, Attn: Customer Relations.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** Visit us online at [ShopSmart.org](http://ShopSmart.org). You can also contact us about your subscription by phone at 866-428-5812. Or write to us at: ShopSmart, P.O. Box 5788, Harlan, IA 51593-1288. (Attach or copy address label from back cover. Allow four to six weeks for processing.)

**MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT ONLINE** Go to [ShopSmart.org/magazine](http://ShopSmart.org/magazine) to renew your current subscription; pay for your subscription; give a gift subscription; change your address; report a missing, duplicate, or damaged issue; or order a new subscription.

### SHOPSMART VOLUME 10, ISSUE 6

**SHOPSMART** (ISSN 1932-3557) is published monthly, except August and February, by Consumer Reports, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057. Subscription rate is \$22.95 for six issues or \$34.95 for 10 issues. Periodicals postage paid at Yonkers, N.Y., and additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER** Send address changes to ShopSmart, P.O. Box 5788, Harlan, IA 51593-1288. If the post office alerts us that your magazines are undeliverable, we have no further obligation to fulfill your order unless we receive a corrected address within two years.

**BACK ISSUES** Single copies of preceding issues, \$6.99 each (includes shipping and handling). Please send payment and issue date to ShopSmart, Attn: Customer Relations Dept., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

**FOR REPRINTS, E-PRINTS, AND RELATED ITEMS** Contact: PARS International. Phone: 212-221-9595. Fax: 212-221-9195.

**PERMISSIONS** Use of CONSUMER REPORTS ShopSmart in whole or in part is forbidden without prior written permission (and is never permitted for advertising purposes). Address requests to CR Permissions Dept., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057, or by e-mail to [wwintman@consumer.org](mailto:wwintman@consumer.org).

**DIGITAL EDITION** On Google Play, Kindle Fire, Next Issue, Nook Color, and Zinio.

**MAILING LISTS** We exchange or rent our customer postal mailing list so that it can be provided to other publications, companies, and nonprofit organizations. If you wish to have your name deleted from our list, please send your address label with a request for deletion from outside use to CONSUMER REPORTS, P.O. Box 2127, Harlan, IA 51593-0316. We do not exchange or rent customers' e-mail addresses, except to our affiliate, the Consumers Union Action Fund (CUAF), which engages in advocacy to improve the marketplace for consumers. You can review our complete privacy policy for CONSUMER REPORTS information products, services, and programs at [ConsumerReports.org/privacy](http://ConsumerReports.org/privacy).

### Digital Cameras



### Laptops



### Vacuum Cleaners



### Mutual Funds

### Cars



# Consumer Reports.org®

Get even more of what you want from CONSUMER REPORTS:

Quick access to the latest Ratings, interactive tools to help you find the right products, side-by-side comparisons, e-Ratings, and more!



Log on to  
**ConsumerReports.org**  
and subscribe today!



# **SHOPPING SECRETS** for Just About Everything You Buy

## **Secrets revealed in recent issues:**

- 12 unhealthy “health” foods (and what to eat instead).
- How to stay safe online – Free!
- Which store brands beat big brands.
- The most reliable and most well-liked cars.
- Best sunscreens and bug sprays.
- Where to buy pet food for less.
- Shoes for less:  
7 websites you’ll love!



**Make shopping easy, fast, fun.  
The secret is in ShopSmart.**

---

**TRY IT RISK-FREE.**

For offer details, go to:  
**[www.ShopSmart.org/secrets0715](http://www.ShopSmart.org/secrets0715)**